

THE

LIFE of ESOP,

COLLECTED FROM

ANTIENT WRITERS.

By Monf. DE MEZIRIAC.

WITH NOTES.

D O D S L E Y'S
SELECT FABLES
OF
ESOP
AND OTHER FABULISTS.
IN THREE BOOKS.

—Is not the earth

With various living creatures, and the air
Replenished, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee? Knowest thou not
Their language and their ways? they also know,
And reason not contemptibly: with these
Find pastime.

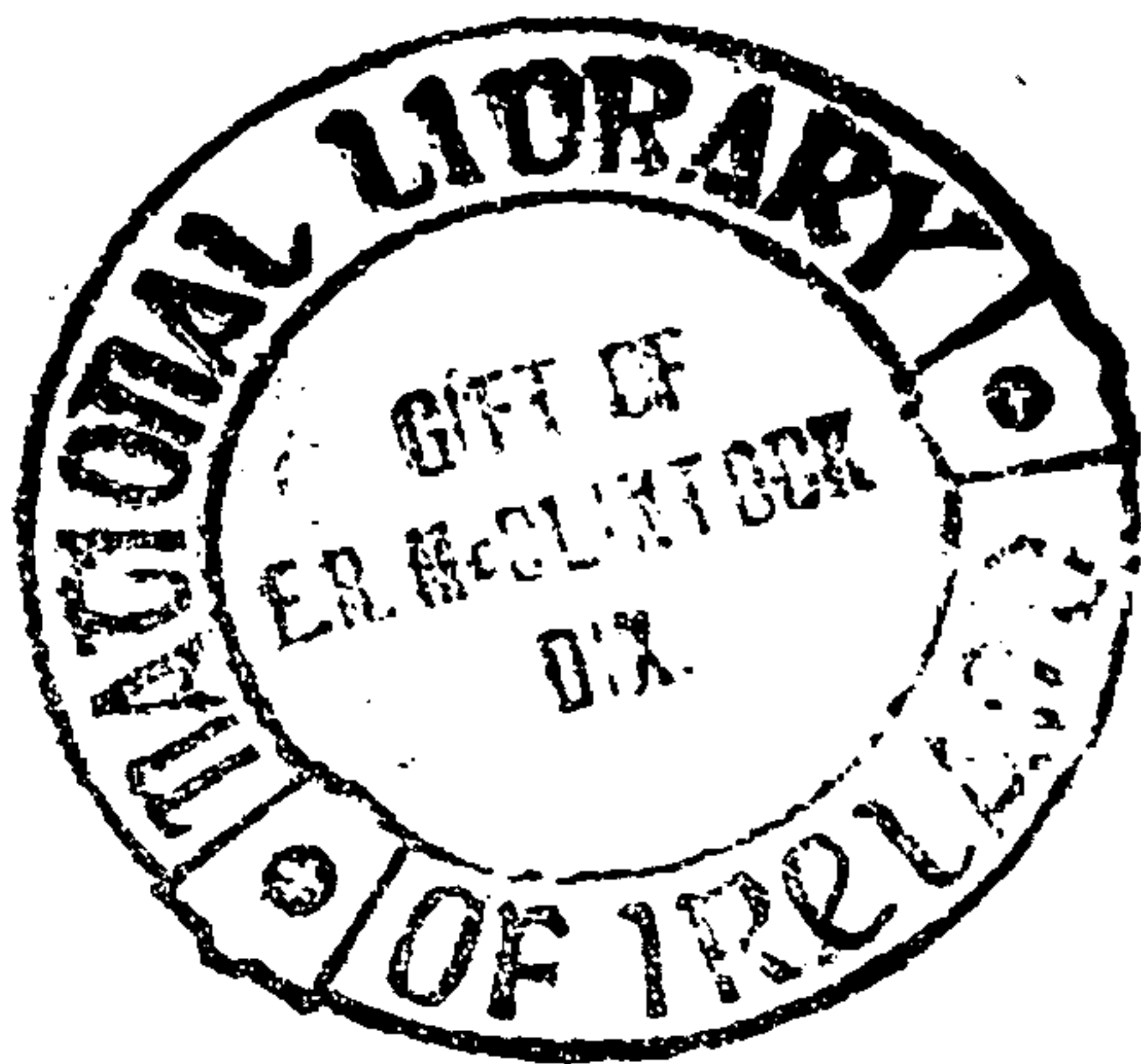
PARADISE-LOST, b. 8 l. 370.

As well for the Use of SCHOOLS as
YOUNG GENTLEMEN.



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THE LIFE of ÆSOP.

CHAP. I.

Of the place of his birth.

IT happened to Homer, the prince of Grecian poets, that the place of his nativity was never certainly known; and it would be as difficult to ascertain the country which gave birth to Æsop, so much have ancient authors differed also upon this subject. Some have thought him a ¹ Lydian, born in the city of Sardis, the capital of that kingdom; others have believed he drew his origin from the island of ² Samos. Some have maintained that he was a ³ Thracian, of the city of Mesembria: but ⁴ authors are now, for the most part, agreed, that he was a native of Phrygia, either of ⁵ Amorium, or ⁶ Cotiæum, both towns in the same province. However as it may be allowable to conjecture on a point so dubious, I imagine they who have thought him a Lydian, or a Samian, have grounded their opinion on the probability of his being born in one of those places where he spent the greatest part of his life; and 'tis certain that during his slavery, his common habitation was in the island of ⁷ Samos; and after he was made free, he lived almost wholly in the court of Cræsus king of Lydia. But though this opinion is not totally destitute of a plausible appearance, the probability of his
a being

iv THE LIFE OF ESOP.

being a 8 Phrygian, as it is founded on the common consent of many antient writers, and supported by the most credible authority, is now generally received and established.

NOTES.

1 Maximus Tyrius, Dissert. XX. 2 Suidas. 3 The Scholiast on Aristophanes. Heraclides in Gronov. Thes. Græc. Tom. VI. p. 2827. 4 Maximus Tyrius, Dissert. XXXIII. Lucian's True History, Book II. Stobæus. Suidas. A. Gellius. Phædrus. 5 Planudes. 6 Suidas. Fabricius. 7 Jadmon at least, his last master, was of this island. Suidas says expressly, that Xanthus was a Lydian. Fabricius indeed calls him a Samian, but quotes no authority for it, nor can I find any. 8 Phrygia is a province of Asia Minor.

It may perhaps be acceptable to some readers, and not improper in this place, to add a passage from the learned Mr. Sale, in his notes to the Koran, concerning the Eastern fabulist Lokman, who has been imagined by some writers to be the same person with our Esop. The Arabian writers, says he, affirm that Lokman was the son of Bâuvan, who was the son or grandson of a sister or aunt of Job; and that he lived several centuries, even to the time of David, with whom he was conversant in Palestine. According to the description they give of his person, he must have been deformed enough; for they say he was of a black complexion, (whence some call him an Ethiopian) with thick lips, and splay feet: but in return, he received from God wisdom and eloquence in a great degree; which, some pretend, were given him in a vision, on his making choice of wisdom preferably to the gift of prophecy, either of which were offered him. The generality of the Mohammedans therefore hold him to have been no prophet, but only a wise man. As to his condition, they say, he was a slave, but obtained his liberty on the following occasion. His master having one day given him a bitter melon to eat, he paid him such exact obedience as to eat it all; at which his master being surprised, asked him, How he could eat so bitter a fruit? To which he replied, It was no wonder, that he should
for

for once accept a bitter fruit from the same hand from which he had received so many favours. The commentators mention several quick repartees of Lokman, which together with the circumstances abovementioned, agree so well with what Maximus Planudes has written of Esop, that from thence, and from the fables attributed to Lokman by the Orientals, the latter has been generally thought to be no other than the Esop of the Greeks. However that be, (for I think the matter will bear a dispute) I am of opinion that Planudes borrowed great part of his life of Esop from the traditions he met with in the East concerning Lokman, concluding them to have been the same person, because they were both slaves, and supposed to be the writers of those fables which go under their respective names, and bear a great resemblance to one another: for it has long been observed by learned men, that the greater part of that monk's performance is an absurd romance, and supported by no evidence of ancient writers.

Sale's Koran, p. 335.

A collection of Lokman's fables may be found in Erpenius's Arabic Grammar, between thirty and forty in number, printed in Arabic, with a Latin translation. They very much resemble the fables of Esop, and have most of them been inserted in our collections: particularly, the stag drinking--The old man and death--The hare and the tortoise--The sun and the wind--all of which are in Erpenius's collection, under the name of Lokman. The fables of Pilpay, the other Eastern, are of quite a different cast; long, tedious, and frequently interwoven one with another. I have inserted in this collection, only one fable from Pilpay, the falcon and the hen, in the second book.

C H A P. II.

Of his person, talents, and disposition.

'T IS allowed by all, that Esop was a slave from his youth, and that in this

this condition he served several masters: but I am ignorant where Planudes has authority for asserting that he was the most deformed of all men living, exactly resembling Homer's Thersites; I find no antient author who thus describes him. What Planudes adds, that the word Esop signifies the same with Æthiop, and was given him on account of the blackness of his visage, may also be very justly contradicted: for though some grammarians are of opinion, that from the verb *ætho*, which signifies to scorch, and from the noun *ops*, which signifies visage, the word Æthiop may be formed; yet we learn from Eustathius, that *ætho* (in the future *æso*) signifies to shine, as well as to burn; and that *ops* with an *o* long signifies the eye: so that the name Esop signifies a man with sparkling eyes. Neither do I give much credit to the same author, when he says, that Esop had such an impediment in his tongue, that he could scarcely utter articulate sounds; as he seems to have attributed this imperfection to him, only to have some ground for the fabulous account which he afterwards gives, of Fortune's appearing to him in a dream, and bestowing on him the gift of speech. Altogether as void of probability is the story which Apollonius tells in a Philostratus; that Mercury, having distributed to other persons the knowledge of all the sciences, had nothing left for Esop but the art of making fables, with which he endowed him. But a principal reason which prevents me from assenting to what Planudes advances, is, that it cannot be supported by authority from any antient author: on the contrary, 'tis asserted in a Greek fragment of his life, found in the works of Aphthonius, that Esop had an excellent disposition, and talents for every thing; and

and in particular, a great inclination and aptitude for music, which is not very consistent with his having a bad voice, and being dumb.

NOTES.

1 Esop being reproached for having καλεπην οψη, a hard-favoured visage, answered; "Regard not my looks, but my mind." "Stobæus." The age of Stobæus is uncertain, but he probably lived some centuries before Planudes. According to Fabricius, he lived not long after Themistius the philosopher, who is the latest author that he quotes: that is, not long after the fourth century. As to Mr. Boyle's argument, drawn from the words of Lucian, "see the third note on this chapter" it is of no force. The ancients in general considered the fables of Esop as of the comic, pleasant, and laughable kind: *Αἰσθητικὴν ψευδοποίησιν*, the pleasantry of Esop. (Aristophanes.) So (says Hesychius) they called the fables of Esop.

2 Book v. chap. 5. I find the story in Bayle, as follows. Esop being a shepherd, and feeding his flock near the temple of Mercury, often begged of that god, with ardent vows, the enjoyment of wisdom. He had a great number of competitors, and what was the consequence? They all went into the temple of Mercury, each carrying rich offerings in their hands. Esop, who was poor, was the only one who had nothing valuable to offer. He only presented a little honey and milk, and some flowers, which were not so much as tied together. Mercury, in the distribution of wisdom, regarding the value of the offerings, gave to one philosophy, to another rhetoric; to one astronomy, to another poetry; and did not remember Esop till he had finished his distribution; when, recollecting a fable which the Hours had told him in his cradle, he gave Esop the talent of inventing fables, which was the only thing left in the house of wisdom.

3 Of all the injuries, says Dr. Bentley, which Planudes has done to Esop, that which can least be forgiven him, is, the making such a monster of him for ugliness: an abuse that has found credit so universally, that all the modern painters, since the time of Planudes,

Planudes, have drawn him in the worst shapes and features that fancy could invent. But what revelation had this monk about Esop's deformity? For he must learn it by dream and vision, and not by ordinary methods of knowledge. He lived about two thousand years after him, and in all that tract of time not one single author has given the least hint, that Esop was ugly. What credit then can be given to an ignorant monk, that broaches a new story after so many ages? In Plutarch's *Convivium* our Esop is one of the guests, with Solon and the other sages of Greece: there is abundance of jest and raillery amongst them, and particularly upon Esop; but nobody drolls upon his ugly face, which could hardly have escaped, had he had such a very ugly one. Perhaps you will say, it had been rude and indecent, to touch upon a natural imperfection. Not at all, if done softly and jocosely. In Plato's *Feast* they are very merry upon Socrates's face, that resembled old Silenus; and in this, they twit Esop for having been a slave, which was no more his fault than deformity would have been. The Athenians set up a noble statue to his memory: but had he been such a monster as Planudes has made of him, a statue had been no better than a monument of his ugliness; it had been kinder to his memory to let that alone. The Greeks have several proverbs about persons deformed; our Esop, if so very ugly, had been in the first rank of them, especially when his statue stood there, to put every body in mind of it. He was a great favourite of Cræsus king of Lydia; who employed him as his ambassador to Corinth and Delphi; but would such a monster as Planudes has set out, be a fit companion for a prince? or a proper ambassador? I wish I could do that justice to the memory of Esop, as to oblige the painters to change their pencil; for 'tis certain he was no deformed person, and 'tis probable he was very handsome.

Bentley on Esop's Fables.

In answer to all this, Mr. Boyle cites a passage from Eustathius, an author who wrote two hundred years before Planudes was born, which he thinks is evidently

evidently built on a supposition that Esop was ugly, and implies that that opinion was common in Eustathius's time. He further tells us, that Lucian, in his *True History* says, they used Esop in the Fortunate Islands for a buffoon, or jester, one that made them sport ; meaning, I suppose, that he did it as well by his person and outside, as by his ingenious and divertive fables : and, indeed, rather by the first than the latter, as his fables of themselves, though they entertain and please us extremely, do not give us that sort of pleasure that causes laughter ; but nothing is so divertive, or raises laughter so much as deformity, especially when wit goes along with it. We may observe, that when Homer has a mind to excite this light passion in his serious poem, he does it by the means of an ugly man, and an ugly god, Thersites and Vulcan.—But Dr. Bentley's conduct with regard to Esop, is very odd. He is extremely concerned to have him thought handsome, at the time that he is endeavouring all he can to prove him no author. He hopes by his civilities to his person, to atone for the injuries which he does him in his writings : which is just such a compliment to Esop's memory, as it would be to Sir William Davenant's, should a man, in defiance of common fame, pretend to make out, that he had always a good “ nose ” on his face ; but however, that he did not write *Gondibert*.

Boyle against Bentley.

I shall here leave the reader to consider the opinions of these two gentlemen, and to take that which seemeth to him the most probable : only observing by the bye, that Mr. Alsop, though a writer at that time in favour of Boyle on the general subject of Esop's Fables, yet, when he came to publish a collection of those Fables, thought proper to make Esop in the frontispiece, a very handsome person.

C H A P. III.

Of his condition, and the course of his studies.

Æ S O P's first master, as may be gathered from the beforementioned Aphthonius, was Zemarchus, or Demarchus, surnamed Carefias, a native and inhabitant of Athens: and his passing some part of his youth in this famous city, the mother and nurse of science and polite learning, was of no small advantage to him. 'Tis probable also, that his master perceiving in him a good understanding, agreeable manners, lively genius, and a general capacity; and finding also that he served him with much affection and fidelity; 'tis probable, I say, that he might take care to get him instructed. It was from Athens then, as from the fountain head, that he drew the purity of the Greek language. It was there too that he acquired the knowledge of moral philosophy, which at that time was the fashionable study; there being but few persons who made profession of the speculative sciences, as may be concluded by the seven sages of Greece, the most celebrated men of that age, amongst whom Thales the Milesian alone had the curiosity to inquire into the secrets of natural philosophy, and into the subtleties of mathematical learning: the rest were not reputed wise for any other reason, than their publishing certain grave and moral sentences, the truth of which they established and rendered of some authority by their prudent and virtuous lives. Æsop, indeed, did not follow their method he wisely considered, that the meanness of his birth,

birth, and his servile condition, would not permit him to speak with sufficient authority in the way of sentence and precept; he therefore composed fables, which, by a narration pleasing and full of novelty, so charms the minds, even of the most ignorant, that through the pleasure which they receive from it, they taste imperceptibly the moral sense which lies concealed underneath.

I know very well that Esop was not the inventor of those fables, in which the use of speech is given to animals. The honour of this invention, as ^a Quintilian alledges, is justly due to the poet Hesiod, who in the first book of his *Works and Days*, relates very prettily the fable of the hawk and the nightingale. Be this as it may—Esop has advanced so far before every competitor, that all fables of this kind are called Esopic, because a great number of them are of his composing; and the choicest precepts of moral philosophy are by his means conveyed to us in this agreeable manner. And indeed, I very highly approve the opinion of Apollonius, who maintains that the fables of Esop are much more useful for the instruction of youth, than the fables of the poets: and his reasons for this assertion are very pertinent, as may be seen in Philostratus. But that Esop composed all his fables during the time that he was a slave at Athens, I will not however affirm: I only think it probable, that it was there he first became enamoured of morality, and laid the plan of teaching the most beautiful and useful maxims of philosophy, under the veil of fables: which nevertheless he might not publish till long afterwards, when he had obtained his freedom, had acquired the reputation of being

ing one of the wisest and ablest men of Greece, and was arrived to great esteem, not only among the common people, but even with princes and kings.

NOTES.

1. Whatever honour may arise from being the inventor of this kind of fable, it seems neither to be due to Hesiod, nor to Esop; as Jotham's fable of the trees is certainly more antient than either of them: and it is for that reason placed at the head of this collection.

2. Book v. chap. 11.

3. The said fable is thus rendered by Cooke.
 While now my fable from the birds I bring,
 To the great rulers of the earth I sing.
 High in the clouds a mighty bird of prey
 Bore a melodious nightingale away;
 And to the captive, shivering in despair,
 Thus, cruel, spoke the tyrant of the air:
 Why mourns the wretch in my superior power?
 Thy voice avails not in the ravish'd hour;
 Vain are thy cries: at my despotic will,
 Or I can set thee free, or I can kill.
 Unwisely who provokes his abler foe,
 Conquest still flies him, and he strives for woe.

Cooke's Hesiod, B. i.

C H A P. IV.

*Of his different masters, and of his fellow servant,
 the famous courtezan, Rhodopis.*

LET us now resume the thread of our narration. In process of time, Esop was sold to Xanthus, a native of the island of Samos; and after he had served him for a certain time, he was again disposed of to the ² philosopher Idmon, or Jadmon, who was likewise of that country; and had at the same time for his slave that ³ Rhodopis, who was afterwards so famous as a courtezan. This woman was endowed

dowed with very extraordinary beauty, and happening to be carried into Egypt, Charaxus, the brother of Sappho the poetess, fell so deeply in love with her, that he sold all he had, and reduced himself to extreme poverty, in order to redeem and set her at liberty. She afterwards rose to such eminence in her vocation, and amassed such heaps of wealth, that of the tythe of her gain, she caused great numbers of large 4 spits of iron to be made, which she sent as an offering to the temple of Apollo at Delphi. And, if we may credit certain authors, she amassed such immense treasures as enabled her to build one of the celebrated 5 pyramids of Egypt. So much, by the way, of this famous courtesan, who was fellow servant with Esop while he lived with Jadmon; to shew how these two persons, born in a servile condition, arrived by very different methods to a more splendid fortune; the one by his merit and the beauties of his mind, the other by the infamous traffic of her personal charms.

For the rest, 'tis certain that it was Jadmon who gave Esop his liberty; whether as a reward for his faithful services, or that he was ashamed to keep longer in servitude a person whose superior qualities rendered him more worthy to command, may be difficult to determine: but the fact is to be proved, by the express testimony of the scholiast of Aristophanes, on the comedy of the Birds, as well as by the authority of Herodotus and Plutarch; for it follows by necessary consequence from what they say, as I shall shew particularly when I come to speak of the death of Esop. Planudes therefore deserves no credit, when he affirms that Xanthus was the last master of Esop, and the person who gave him his liberty. Very little also must be believed of what he relates concerning Esop while he was in the service of

of Xanthus: as he makes him say and do so many impertinent and ridiculous things, that none can receive them for true, without imagining Æsop an idle buffoon, rather than a serious philosopher. And in fine, since nothing of this ridiculous stuff is to be found in ancient writers, I think one may with justice affirm, that they are no better than idle tales, and mere fooleries.

NOTES.

1. The scholiast on Aristophanes, on which Meziriac builds his authority for *this*, does not say so.

2. Neither Herodotus, nor Plutarch, nor Suidas, calls him a philosopher: it was a title unknown in the time of Æsop, being first adopted by the modesty of Pythagoras, who was fifty or sixty years later. Indeed the scholiast on Aristophanes calls him *εἰσος*, the wise.

3. As she was very beautiful, and the town of Naucratis in the island of Lesbos, where she settled, was full of rich and voluptuous men, she got a great estate by being a courtesan.

Herodotus B. II. chap. 134. Plutarch.

4 Rhodopis being desirous that a monument of her should be left in Greece, resolved to make such a present to the temple at Delphi, as had never been made nor thought of before. For this reason, she provided as many iron spits to roast oxen, as the tenth of her substance was sufficient to buy, and sent them to Delphi. These are still preserved behind the altar which the Chians raised, and over against the temple itself.

Herodotus.

5. Pliny's Nat. Hist. B. XXXVI. chap. 12. But Herodotus, though a credulous author, rejects this story. He maintains, that the pyramid, the building of which was ascribed to Rhodopis, was built many years before the reign of Amasis, in which that courtesan lived. He adds, that though she had got a great estate, she would not have been able to sustain the immense charges of that building.

Herod. B. II. chap. 134, 135.

6. As

6. As it does contain such mere fooleries, it is consequently very improper to be prefixed to a book of moral lessons, which Quintilian recommends as the most useful that can be put into the hands of youth. ‘Igitur Esopi fabellas, says he, quæ fabulis nutricularum proxime succedunt, narrare sermone puro, et nihil se supra modum extollente; deinde eandem gracilitatem stylo exigere, condiscant. Quint. Lib. I. Let them learn to recite Esop’s fables (which come next after the little stories of the nursery) in pure language, free from all undue elevation; and then let them exercise their stile upon the same model of simplicity.

C H A P. V.

Of his advancement to the court of Cræsus King of Lydia, and of his meeting the seven sages there.

WHATEVER may be doubtful in the life of Esop, there is nothing more certain than that after recovering his liberty, he soon acquired a very great reputation amongst the Greeks, being held in almost equal estimation with any of the seven sages who flourished at this time, that is, the ¹ fifty-second olympiad. The fame of his wisdom reaching the ears of Cræsus, that monarch sent for him to his court, admitted him to his friendship, and so obliged him by his favours, that he ² engaged himself in his service to the end of his days. His residence in the court of this mighty king rendered him more polite than most of the other philosophers of his time; more complaisant to the humours of princes, and more reconciled to monarchical government, of which he gave evident proofs on divers occasions. For instance; when Cræsus had prevailed with the seven sages to meet in his capital

capital city of Sardis ; after having shewn them the magnificence of his court, and his vast riches; he asked them, Whom they thought the happiest man of all they had known? Some named one person, and some another: Solon, in particular, gave this praise to 3 Tellus, an Athenian; and also to 4 Cleobis and Biton, Argians! concluding that no one could be pronounced happy before his death. Esop, perceiving the king was not well satisfied with any of their answers, spoke in his turn, and said—For my part, I am persuaded that Croesus hath as much pre-eminence in happiness over all other men, as the sea hath over all the rivers. The king was so pleased with this judgment, that he eagerly pronounced that sentence, which has continued ever since a common proverb—*The Phrygian has hit the mark.* When Solon, therefore, took leave of Croesus, who dismissed him very coolly; Esop being sorry that Solon had spoken to the king with so little complaisance, said to him, as he accompanied him part of the way, O Solon, either we must not speak to kings, or we must say what pleases them. On the contrary, answered Solon, we must either not speak to kings at all, or we must give them good and useful advice. Another time, as Esop was travelling over Greece, either to satisfy his curiosity, or about the particular affairs of Croesus, it happened that he passed through Athens, just after 5 Pisistratus had usurped the sovereign power, and abolished the popular state: seeing that the Athenians bore the yoke very impatiently, longing to recover their liberty, and to rid themselves of Pisistratus, though his government was easy and moderate, Esop related to them the fable of the frogs that intreated Jupiter to give them a king; exhorting them to submit cheerfully to so good a prince as Pisistratus,

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lest in changing they should fall under the power of some mischievous and cruel tyrant.

NOTES.

1 Laertius, in the Life of Chilon.

2 Suidas.

3 Tellus was a poor Athenian, but a man of great probity; who, upon account of having given his children a good education, and lost his own life in the field of battle, fighting for his country, had this noble testimony given to his happiness, by Solon.

Plutarch. Diog. Laertius.

4. Cleobis and Biton were sons to the priestess of Juno, who, when their mother wanted horses for her chariot, set their shoulders to it, and drew it to the temple, which was 48 furlongs. The old lady, being much affected with this instance of filial duty, prayed the goddess Juno to favour them with the greatest blessing that could be bestowed upon mankind: the next morning after this devotion, they were both found dead in the temple. Herod. B. I. Val. Max. B. V. And the story is mentioned also by Cicero in his Tusculan Questions, to shew, that death is to be looked upon rather as an advantage than an evil.

5. Phædrus.

C H A P. VI.

Some detached particulars of his life, and the improbability of Planudes's account of his travels into Egypt and Babylon.

T H E R E are not many other particulars found concerning Esop, in authors worthy of credit; except it be that he once again met with the seven sages of Greece, in the court of Periander king of Corinth. However, I dare not affirm whether it was here, or in some other place, that falling into discourse with Chilon, who had asked him, What God was doing?

ing? He answered that he was, humbling high things, and exalting low. Some also relate, that to shew how the life of man abounds with misery, and that one pleasure is accompanied with a thousand pains, Esop was wont to say, that 3 Prometheus having taken earth to form a man, had tempered and moistened it, not with water, but with tears.

I reject as pure falshood and invention, all that Planudes writes of Esop's travels into Egypt and Babylon, because he intermixes stories altogether incredible; and adds to them certain circumstances, which are repugnant to the truth of history, or which wholly overturn the order of time. I shall content myself with alledging two signal falsities, on which he builds all the rest of his narration. He says, that the king who reigned in Babylon when Esop went thither, was called Lycerus. But who has ever read or heard of such a king? Let the catalogue of all the kings of Babylon, from Nabonassar to Alexander the Great be examined, and you shall not find one amongst them whose name is at all like Lycerus. On the other hand, by the exactest chronology it will appear, that in Esop's time there could be no other king in Babylon, but Nebuchadnezer, and his father Nebopolassar; since Nebopolassar reigned one and twenty-years, and Nebuchadnezer forty-three who dyed the same year with Esop, being the first of the fifty-fourth olympiad. Neither is it more possible to believe, that Esop went into Egypt in the time of King Nectanebus, as Planudes asserts; since this king did not begin to reign till two hundred years after the death of Esop: that is to say, in the hundred-and-fourth-olympiad. And one need not be very learned in chronology, to be certain, that Esop lived partly under the reign of Apries, and partly under that of

of his successor Amasis, kings of Egypt.

NOTES.

1. Plutarch assures us, in *Convivio Sapientum*, that Cræsus sent Esop to Periander the tyrant of Corinth, as well as to the oracle at Delphi : but how does this agree with Laertius, who, in the life of Periander, tells us, that, according to Socrates, Periander died many years before the reign of Cræsus ?

2. Laertius, in the life of Chilon.

3. Themist. Orat. XXXII.

C H A P. VII.

Of his death.

WHAT Planudes relates about the death of Esop, comes nearer to the truth, than any thing which he has written concerning his life. However, it is still safer to rely on what ancient authors have said on the subject, and they record it thus. Esop, being sent by Cræsus to the city of Delphi, with a large sum of gold, in order to offer magnificent sacrifices to Apollo, and to distribute to each citizen four minæ of silver ; it happened that differences arose between him and the townsmen to such a degree, that he spoke of them in very provoking terms. Among other things, he reproached them with having hardly any arable land, and that were it not for the great concourse of strangers, and the frequent sacrifices that were offered in their temple, they would soon be reduced to die of hunger. Not satisfied with offending them in words, he proceeded to deeds : having performed the sacrifices in the manner that Cræsus had ordered, he sent back the rest of the money to the city of Sardis, as judging the Delphians unworthy to partake of the king's liberality. This irritated them against him to such a degree, that they consulted how they

they might be revenged on him, and conspired by a notorious villainy to take away his life. They hid amongst his baggage one of the 3 golden vessels consecrated to Apollo; and as Esop departed towards Phocis, they sent immediate messengers after him, who searching his baggage found the vessel which they themselves had there deposited. On this, they presently drag him to prison, accuse him of sacrilege, and sentence him to be precipitated from the rock Hyampia, which was the punishment commonly inflicted on sacrilegious persons. As they were on the point of throwing him off, in order to deter them from so execrable an act by the apprehension of divine justice, which suffers no wickedness to go unpunished, he told them the 4 fable of the eagle and the beetle. But the Delphians paying no regard to his fable, pushed him down the precipice. It is recorded, however, that their land was rendered barren, and that they were afflicted with many strange distempers, for several years afterwards. In this distress they consulted the oracle, and were answered, that all their miseries were owing to the unjust condemnation and death of Esop. On this, they caused it to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet, at all the public feasts and general meetings of the Greeks, that if there were any of the kindred of Esop, who would demand satisfaction for his death, he was desired to come and exact it of them, in what 5 manner he pleased. But no one was found that pretended any right in this affair, till the third generation; when a Samian presented himself, named Jadmon, grandson of that Jadmon, who had been master to Esop in the island of Samos: and the Delphians having made him some satisfaction, were delivered from their calamities. 'Tis said, that after this time, they transferred the punishment of sacrilegious persons from the rock Hyampia to that of

of Nauplia. From hence it appears, as I hinted above, to be the opinion of Herodotus and Plutarch, that Jadmon was the last master of Esop, and he that set him free; because otherwise, neither he nor any of his descendents could have any interest in his death, nor pretend to any right of seeking reparation, or receiving satisfaction.

NOTES.

1. Scholiast on Aristophanes, Vesp. v. 1437.
2. On what occasion these differences arose, we are not expressly told: yet some circumstances lead one to imagine, that Esop's expectations were not quite satisfied with regard to the Delphians. From the great concourse of sensible men, who were dispatched from all parts of Greece to their city, he had probably been led to expect in them some superior degree of virtue or wisdom; but found them upon a nearer acquaintance, to be not only lazy but ignorant: his reproaching them for depending so much on the benefits arising from sacrifices, as to neglect the cultivation of their lands, seem an intimation of the first; and his comparing the curiosity that brought him thither, to that of people at the sea side, who seeing somewhat come floating towards them a great way off at sea, take it at first to be some mighty matter; but upon its driving nearer and nearer to the shore, find it at last to be only a heap of weeds and rubbish—is almost a confirmation of the latter. Indeed, what authority Sir Roger Lestrange had for making Esop relate this fable to the Delphians, he has not been so kind as to inform us.
3. Aristophanes. Heraclides, in Gronov. Thes. Græc. tom. VI. p. 2830.
4. The eagle and the beetle was one of the most noted fables of Esop: Aristophanes mentions it several times. The circumstances of it, as far as they may be collected from him, are as follows: "That the beetle flew up to heaven; and out of hatred to the eagle, rolled his eggs out of the nest, and so revenged himself on the injury which the eagle had done him." In Pace, v. 177. he says, "That Esop told this fable to the Delphians, when they had accused him of sacrilege. Vesp. v. 1437. " And when they

they were about to throw him down the rock," says the scholiast. The scholiast upon these passages gives us these farther particulars: "It is related in the fables of Esop, that the eagle and the beetle were at enmity together, and they destroyed one another's eggs: that the eagle having seized and eaten up the young ones of the beetle, and so given the first provocation, the beetle got by stealth at the eagle's eggs, and rolled them out of the nest; following him even into the presence of Jupiter: the eagle making his complaint, Jupiter ordered him to make his nest in his lap: while Jupiter had the eggs in his lap, the beetle came flying about him: and Jupiter rising up unawares, to drive the beetle away from his head, threw down the eggs and broke them." Suidas, plainly quoting the same fable, says also, "That he rose up to drive away the beetle flying about his head." Aristophanes in another place uses the proverbial saying, "I will be your midwife, as the beetle was to the eagle." *Lyfistrata*, v 695. Upon which the scholiast remarks, "That the beetles destroy the eagle's eggs by rolling them out of the nest;" and Suidas says, "That the proverb is used of those, who revenge themselves of such as have first used them ill, though they are much more powerful," and adds likewise, "That the beetle is said to destroy the eagle's eggs" as a thing that commonly happens.

It is plain from hence, that the fable of the eagle and beetle, as we have it now, differs very much from the original fable of Esop. There is no mention at all of the hare; the provocation given by the eagle was his destroying the beetle's eggs, or young ones; and the beetle made Jupiter throw the eggs out of his lap, not by throwing a ball of dung into his lap, but by flying about his head. What is added in the present fable, of Jupiter's endeavouring to reconcile the two parties, but in vain; and then, to preserve the race of eagles, ordering them to lay their eggs in a season in which no beetles appear; is quite beside Esop's purpose, and the occasion of the fable. The moral, which he intended to express, and which the occasion required, is, agreeable to Suidas's interpretation of the proverb, that the weak often find means to revenge themselves of the powerful, who without

provocation have injured them. The latter circumstance relating to the season in which the eagle breeds, is contrary to the observation of the scholiast on Aristophanes, and Suidas; and, I suppose, is not true in fact.

The genuine fable of Æsop is certainly lost; and that which we have may probably have been invented by Planudes; it is in his collection, and stands the fourth in that edition of them, which was printed by Robert Stephens in 1546. That the reader may judge for himself, I will here insert a literal translation of it, given me by the same learned friend, who favoured me with the above observations.

The Eagle and the Beetle.

A hare being pursued by an eagle, betook himself for refuge to the nest of the beetle, whom he intreated to save him. The beetle therefore interceded with the eagle, begging of him not to kill the poor suppliant hare; and conjuring him by the almighty Jupiter, not to slight and disregard his intercession, because he was so small an animal. But the eagle in great wrath gave the beetle a slap with his wing, and immediately seized the hare, and devoured him. When the eagle flew away, the beetle flew after him, so far as to learn where his nest was; and then getting to it, rolled down his eggs out of it, and broke them. The eagle, grieved and enraged to think that any one should attempt so audacious a thing, built his nest the next time in a higher place; but the beetle got to it again, and served him just in the same manner. The eagle greatly distressed, and not knowing what to do, flew up to Jupiter, (to whom he is accounted sacred) and placed her third brood of eggs as a deposit in the lap of the god, begging him to guard them. Upon this the beetle, having made a ball of dung, flew up, and dropped it in Jupiter's lap: who rising on a sudden to shake it off, unawares threw down the eggs with it, which were thus again broken. Jupiter being informed by the beetle, that he had done this to be revenged of the eagle, who had not only behaved injuriously to him, [the beetle] but even impiously towards the god himself, told the eagle when he came to him, that
the

the beetle was the party aggrieved, and that he complained not without reason: but being unwilling that the race of eagles should be diminished, he advised the beetle to come to an accommodation with the eagle. As the beetle would not agree to this, he transferred the eagle's breeding to another season, when there are no beetles to be seen.

Aburdities in the foregoing fable.

The hare's flying to the beetle for protection; or to the beetle's nest for refuge: ——— utterly improbable.

The beetle's rolling the eagles eggs out of the nest; ——— impossible.

The only moral of the fable is, that no protection, however powerful, shall exempt the oppressive and injurious from the vengeance of the sufferers, however weak. The circumstance added, that Jupiter transferred the eagle's breeding to a season when there are no beetles, destroys this moral; and is probably also false in fact.

5 Herodotus. Plutarch.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the honours done him after his death.

AND now I will readily agree with Planudes, that Esop was regretted by the greatest and wisest men of Greece, who testified to the Delphians how much they resented his death. But I add, that the Athenians, in particular, had Esop in so much honour, that they erected for him a magnificent statue in their city; regarding more the greatness of his personal merit, than the meanness of his race and condition. I further say, that the opinion which all the world had conceived of his wisdom and probity, encouraged the poets to make the people believe, that the gods had raised him again to life, as they had done Tyndarus, Hercules, Glaucus, and Hypolitus. Nay, some have not scrupled to affirm, that he

he lived many years after his ² resurrection, and fought twice on the side of the Greeks, against the Persians, in the straits of Thermophyle, which must have been above eighty years after his death. But these are such manifest absurdities, as confute themselves. Neither is it probable, as some have asserted, that he wrote ³ two books concerning what happened to him in the city of Delphi, unless it be supposed that he made two voyages thither, and wrote of the first: for in the last, it is very improbable he should have any time for such a work; neither can it be grounded on the testimony of any author worthy of credit. 'Tis indeed most probable, that he left nothing in writing but his ⁴ fables; which, either for the elegance of the narration, or the usefulness of their morality, have always been so much esteemed, that many of them have preserved themselves in the memories of men for above two thousand years. Yet I do ~~not~~ assert, that those which Planudes has published, are the ⁵ very fables which Esop wrote, as Planudes has given us too many occasions to doubt of his sincerity; and also, as he has omitted in his collection many fables, which antient authors have attributed to Esop. If we could be certain that it is the genuine work of Esop, we must doubtless confess, that we have no writings in prose more antient, except the books of Moses, and some others of the Old Testament.

NOTES.

1. Scholiast on Aristophanes. Aves, v. 471. Suidas.

2. Ptolomæus. Hephestion in Photius & Biblioth.

3. Suidas.

4. Dr. Bentley asserts, that it is very uncertain whether Esop left any fables behind him in writing. To which Mr. Byyle answers, that the phrase of antiquity is the same when they mention any thing of Esop's

Esop's, as it would have been, had they thought Esop really to have written it: the ancients quote him just as they do other authors.

Boyle against Bentley.

There is a passage in Plato's *Phædo*, where Socrates says, Among the fables of Esop which I had at hand and knew to be his, I put those into verse that first occurred to me. Which words imply, that Socrates made use of a written book of Esop's fables.

Ibid.

Of three passages, proceeds the same writer, which the Doctor has brought to prove Esop no author, two of them prove the direct contrary; and the other proves only, that Dr. Bentley has read somebody, that has read Aristophanes. And is this the irresistible evidence, with which he has taken upon him to confront the opinion of two thousand years? Is it fit that men should make use of their little skill in letters, their conjectures, their fancies, their dreams, to attack the reputation of our first masters in writing? Is it grateful, with such groundless suspicions as these, to fall upon the father of moral fable, whose happy way of conveying knowledge has been ever spoken of with so much respect, and been of such standing use to mankind?

Ibid.

5. It is remarkable, says father Vavassor, that Henry Stephens in his *Thesaurus Linguae Græcæ*, never cited Esop's fables; which shews that he took them for the work of a modern Greek. "It seems probable, " nay almost certain, says he, that Planudes collected " fables of Esop, partly from his ancestors, and partly " from reading several authors; that some were his own " invention, that he added the moral and explication, " often agreeably to his own fancy, and that the whole " was put into his own form and words. He confirms his conjecture by the conformity of style which may be observed between the Life of Esop, and the fables: and no one is ignorant that Planudes is the author of that life. Vavassor further observes, that mention is made of the Piræus in one of Esop's fables. Now the Piræus was not built till the 76th olympiad; before that

that time the Phalerum was the port of the Athenians: so that as Æsop died in the 54th olympiad, long before Themistocles had built the Piræus, it would have been the Phalerum, and not the Piræus, that Æsop would have mentioned.

But father Vavassor is not the first who has taken Planudes for the author of Æsop's fables now extant. Nevelet, who published a collection of fables in 1610, declared himself of this opinion. "Of all the manuscripts in my possession, says he, not one had the fables of Æsop which now are published, which I imagine to be written by Planudes, as well as Æsop's life. The manuscripts he speaks of were in the library of Heidelberg, and had furnished him with about 136 fables, which he added to those of Æsop already printed which were about 150; so that Nevelet's collection consisted of 286 fables.

Bayle.

The late Dr. Bentley was also of this opinion. I shall examine, says he, those Greek fables now extant, that assume the name of Æsop himself. There are two parcels of the present fables; the one, which are more antient, 136 in number, were first published out of the Heidelberg library, by Neveletus, in 1610. The editor himself well observed, that they were falsely ascribed to Æsop, because they mention holy monks. To which I will add, says the Doctor, another remark, that there is a sentence out of Job — 'Naked we all came, and naked shall we return. But because these two passages are in the epimythion, (the moral) and belong not to the fable itself; they may justly be supposed to be additions only, and interpolations of the true book. I shall therefore give some better reasons to prove they are a recent work. That they cannot be Æsop's own, the 181st fable is a demonstrative proof: for that is a story of Demades the rhetor, who lived about 200 years after our Phrygian's time. The 193d is about Momus's carping at the works of the gods. He there finds this fault in the bull, that his eyes were not placed in his horns, that he might see where he pushed. But Lucian, speaking of the same fable, has it thus, That his horns were not placed

placed right before his eyes. And Aristotle has it a third way, That his horns were not placed about his shoulders, where he might make the strongest push; but in the tenderest part, his head. I think it probable from hence, that Esop did not write a book of his fables; for then there would not have been such a difference in the telling. — There is a great reason to believe they were drawn up by Planudes, a monk of Constantinople, who died in the year 1370: for there is no manuscript, any where, above 300 years old, that has the fables according to that copy. — This idiot of a monk has also given us a book which he calls a life of Esop, that perhaps cannot be match'd in any language, for ignorance and nonsense. He had picked up two or three true stories, that Esop was a slave to one Xanthus, carryed a burthen of bread, conversed with Croesus, and was put to death at Delphi: but the circumstances of these, and all his other tales, are pure invention. He makes Xanthus, an ordinary Lydian, or Samian, to be a philosopher, which word was not heard of in those days, but invented afterwards by Pythagoras. 'Twas the king of Ethiopia's problem to Amasis King of Egypt, to drink up the sea: but Planudes makes it a wager of Xanthus with one of his scholars. To say nothing of his chronological errors, mistakes of a hundred or two hundred years, who can read with patience that silly discourse between Xanthus and his man Esop; not a bit better than our penny merriments printed at London bridge.

Bentley on Esop's fables.

In answer to what Dr. Bentley has said above, concerning the fables of Esop being not written by himself, Mr. Boyle thus argues. Nobody ever imagined that all, or half the fables, that have gone under the name of Esop, are his: or that any of them almost, are in the very same words and syllables, that they were in when they came out of his hands. They have doubtless undergone great alterations, some more and some less: but if under all these changes, still the same little story in its chief circumstances, the same simplicity in telling it, the same humorous turn
of

of thought, and in a good measure the same words too, have been preserved; there is enough of Esop left, whereby we may make a true judgment of his spirit, and genius, and manner of performance. When Dr. Bentley shall clearly have made out, either that none of these fables came from Esop himself; or, if they did, yet that in the very form and cast of them, as well as the expression, they have been since so totally altered, that they deserve not to be called the same; it will then be time enough to own, that we are unable to judge of Esop's merit by any thing in the present collection: but till that is done, we may safely enjoy our opinions, and they that have admired Esop, may venture to go on, and admire him still.

As for what the Doctor has said of Planudes, I must confess, says Mr. Boyle, I have not the deepest veneration for his character; but neither can I think so despicably of him as the lofty Dr. Bentley does, because I find him well spoken of by men of good knowledge and judgment, and even by his adversaries themselves. Nay, Dr. Bentley, I think, gives an account of him, not at all to his disadvantage, where he says, that the set of fables he put out was of his own drawing up: amongst which, there are several so well turned, so exactly copyed from nature, and built on such a true knowledge of human life and affairs, that 'tis plain he was neither an idiot nor a monk, that composed them. But the only reason Dr. Bentley gives for his believing them to be drawn up by Planudes, is, that there is no manuscript, any where above 1000 years old, that has the fables according to that copy. No manuscript! any where! Very extensive words: 'tis pretty difficult to answer for all the libraries of Europe. But this was an assertion fit to be laid down by Dr. Bentley, because impossible to be proved; and I believe not difficult to be disproved: for, as much out of the way of these things as I live, I have casually heard of a manuscript, older than Planudes, that has the fables according to his copy; Vossius's manuscript I mean, which, though I have not seen myself, yet better judges than I am, who

have seen it, assure me, that it is about 500 years old, and that Vossius himself always esteemed it so. 'Tis now at Leyden.

Boyle against Bentley.

Fabricius doubts of this manuscript of Vossius mentioned by Boyle: it requires, he says, further examination. Montfaucon promised, (in his *Diarium Italicum*) that he would publish from a manuscript of the monastery of St. Mary at Florence, the life of Esop, with the fables, as they were extant before the time of Planudes, more at large: (*ἑν ἑνὶ ἑνὶ* in a diffuse style) for that Planudes had omitted some fables, and had written both the life and the fables in a very different style, and after his own manner.

Fabricius.

I suppose Montfaucon never fulfilled his promise.

A N

ESSAY on FABLE.

Introduction.

WHOEVER undertakes to compose a fable, whether of the sublimer and more complex kind, as the epick and dramattick; or of the lower and more simple, as what has been called the Esopean; must first endeavour to illustrate some one moral or prudential maxim. To this point the composition in all its parts must be directed; and this will lead him to describe some action proper to enforce the maxim he has chosen. In several respects therefore the greater fable and the less agree. It is the business of both to teach some particular moral, exemplified by an action, and this enlivened by natural incidents. Both alike must be supported by apposite and proper characters, and both be furnished with sentiments and language suitable to the characters thus employ'd. I would by no means however infer, that to produce one of these small pieces requires the same degree of genius, as to form an epick or dramattick Fable. All I would insinuate, is, that the apologue has a right to some share of our esteem, from the relation it bears to the poems before mentioned: as it is honourable to spring from a noble stem, although in ever so remote a branch.

a branch. A perfect fable, even of this inferior kind, seems a much stronger proof of genius than the mere narrative of an event. The latter indeed requires *judgment*: the former, together with judgment, demands an effort of the *imagination*.

Having thus endeavoured to procure these little compositions as much regard as they may fairly claim, I proceed to treat of some particulars most essential to their character.

S E C T. I.

Of the Truth or Moral of a Fable.

TIS the very essence of a Fable to convey some *Moral* or *useful* Truth, beneath the shadow of an *allegory*. It is this chiefly that distinguishes a *Fable* from a *Tale*; and indeed gives it the pre-eminence in point of use and dignity. A tale may consist of an event either serious or comic; and, provided it be told agreeably, may be excellent in its *kind*, tho' it should imply no sort of Moral. But the action of a Fable is contrived on *purpose* to teach and to imprint some Truth; and should clearly and obviously include the illustration of it, in the very catastrophe.

The *Truth* to be preferred on this occasion, should neither be too obvious, nor trite, nor trivial. Such would ill deserve the pains employed in Fable to convey it. As little also should it be one that is very dubious, dark, or controverted. It should be of such a nature as to challenge the assent of every ingenuous and sober judgment; never a point of mere speculation; but tending to *inform* or to *remind* the reader,

reader, of the proper means that lead to happiness.

The reason why fable has been so much esteemed in all ages and in all countries, is perhaps owing to the *polite* manner in which its maxims are convey'd. The very article of giving instruction, supposes at least a superiority of wisdom in the adviser; a circumstance by no means favourable to the ready admission of advice. 'Tis the peculiar excellence of Fable to *wave* this air of superiority: it leaves the *reader* to collect the moral; who, by thus discovering more than is shewn him, finds his principle of self-love *gratified*, instead of being *disgusted*. The attention is either taken off from the adviser; or, if otherwise, we are at least flattered by his humility and address.

Besides, instruction, as conveyed by Fable, does not only lay aside its lofty mein and supercilious aspect, but appears drest in all the smiles and graces which can strike the imagination, or engage the passions. It pleases in order to convince; and it imprints its moral so much the deeper, in proportion as it entertains; so that we may be said to *feel* our duties at the very instant that we *comprehend* them.

I am very sensible with what difficulty a Fable is brought to a strict agreement with the foregoing account of it. This however ought to be the writer's *aim*. 'Tis the simple manner in which the Morals of Esop are interwoven with his Fables, that distinguishes, and gives him the preference to all other mythologists. His mountain delivered of a mouse, produces the Moral of his Fable, in ridicule of pompous pretenders; and his crow, when she drops her cheese, lets fall, as it were by accident, the

strongest admonition against the power of flattery. There is no need of a separate sentence to explain it ; no possibility of impressing it deeper, by that load we too often see of accumulated reflections. Indeed the Fable of the Cock and the precious stone is in *this* respect very exceptionable. The lesson it inculcates is so dark and ambiguous, that different expositors have given it quite *opposite* interpretations; some imputing the cock's rejection of the diamond to his *wisdom*, and others to his *ignorance*.

Strictly speaking then, one should render needless any *detach'd* or explicit moral. Esop, the father of this kind of writing, disclaimed any such assistance. 'Tis the province of Fable to give it birth in the mind of the person for whom it is intended: otherwise the precept is *direct* and *obvious*, contrary to the nature and end of *allegory*.

After all, the *greatest fault* in any composition (for I can hardly allow that *name* to riddles) is *obscurity*. There can be *no* purpose answered by a work that is unintelligible. Annibal Caracci and Raphael himself, rather than *risque* so unpardonable a fault, have admitted *verbal explanations* into some of their best pictures. It must be confessed, that every story is not capable of telling its own Moral. In a case of this nature, and this only, it should be *expressly* introduced. Perhaps also, where the point is doubtful, we ought to *shew enough* for the less acute, even at the hazard of *shewing too much* for the more sagacious; who, for this very reason, that they *are* more sagacious; will pardon a superfluity which is such to *them alone*.

But on these occasions, it has been matter of dispute, whether the moral is better introduced

duced at the end or beginning of a Fable. Esop, as I said before, universally rejected any separate Moral. Those we *now* find at the close of his Fables, were placed there by *other* hands. Among the antients, Phædrus; and Gay, among the moderns, inserted theirs at the *beginning*: La Motte prefers them at the *conclusion*; and Fontaine disposes of them *indiscriminately* at the beginning or end, as he sees convenient. If, amidst the authority of such great names, I might venture to mention my *own* opinion, I should rather *prefix* them as an *introduction*, than *add* them as an *appendage*. For I would neither pay my *reader* nor *myself* so bad a compliment, as to suppose, after he had read the Fable, that he was not able to discover its meaning. Besides, when the Moral of a Fable is not very prominent and striking, a leading thought at the beginning puts the reader in a proper track. He knows the game which he pursues: and, like a beagle on a warm scent, he follows the sport with alacrity, in proportion to his intelligence. On the other hand, if he have *no* previous intimation of the design, he is puzzled throughout the Fable; and cannot determine upon its merit without the trouble of a fresh perusal. A ray of light, imparted at first, may shew him the tendency and propriety of every expression as he goes along; but while he travels in the dark, no wonder if he stumble or mistake his way.

S E C T. II.

Of the Action and Incidents proper for a Fable.

IN chusing the action or allegory, three conditions are altogether expedient. I. It must be

clear : that is, it ought to shew without equivocation, precisely and obviously, what we intend should be understood. II. It must be *one* and *entire*. That is, it must not be composed of separate and independent actions, but must tend in all its circumstances to the completion of one single event. III. It must be *natural* ; that is, founded, if not on Truth, at least on probability ; on popular opinion ; on that relation and analogy which things bear to one another, when we have gratuitously endowed them with the human faculties of speech and reason. And these conditions are taken from the nature of the human mind ; which cannot endure to be embarrassed, to be bewildered, or to be deceived.

A Fable offends against *perspicuity*, when it leaves us doubtful *what* Truth the Fabulist intended to convey. We have a striking example of this, in Dr. Croxall's Fable of the creaking wheel. " A coachman, says he, hearing one of his wheels creak, was surprized ; but more especially, when he perceived that it was the worst wheel of the whole set, and which he thought had but little pretence to take such a liberty. But, upon his demanding the reason why it did so, the wheel replied, that it was natural for people who laboured under any affliction or calamity to complain." Who would imagine this Fable designed, as the author informs us, for an admonition to repress, or keep our complaints to *ourselves* ; or if we *must* let our sorrows speak, to take care it be done in solitude and retirement. The story of this Fable is not well imagined : at least, if meant to support the moral which the author has drawn from it.

A Fable is faulty in respect to unity, when the several circumstances point *different* ways ;
and

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and do not center, like so many lines, in one distinct and unambiguous moral. An example of this kind is furnished by *La Motte* in the observation he makes upon Fontaine's two pigeons. "These pigeons had a reciprocal affection for each other. One of them shewing a desire to travel, was earnestly opposed by his companion, but in vain. The former sets out upon his rambles, and encounters a thousand unforeseen dangers ; while the latter suffers near as much at home, thro' his apprehensions for his roving friend. However, our traveller, after many hairbreadth 'scapes, returns at length in safety back, and the two pigeons are, once again, mutually happy in each other's company." Now the application of this Fable is utterly vague and uncertain, for want of circumstances to determine, whether the author designed principally to represent the *dangers* of the *Traveller*; his friend's *anxiety* during his *absence* ; or their *mutual happiness* on his *return*. Whereas had the travelling pigeon met with no disasters on his way, but only found all pleasures insipid for want of his friend's participation ; and had he returned from no other motive, than a desire of seeing him again, the whole then had happily closed in this one conspicuous inference, that the presence of a real friend is the most desirable of all gratifications.

The last rule I have mentioned that a Fable should be natural, may be violated several ways. 'Tis opposed, when we make creatures enter into unnatural associations. Thus the sheep or the goat must not be made to hunt with the lion ; and it is yet *more* absurd, to represent the lion as falling in love with the forester's daughter. 'Tis infringed, by ascribing to them appetites and passions that are not consistent with their

their known characters ; or else by employing them in such occupations, as are foreign and unsuitable to their respective natures. A fox should not be said to long for grapes ; an hedgehog pretend to drive away flies ; nor a partridge offer his service to delve in the vineyard. A ponderous iron and an earthen vase should not swim together down a river ; and he that should make his goose lay golden eggs, would shew a luxurient *fancy*, but very little *judgment*. In short, nothing besides the faculty of speech and reason, which fable has been allowed to confer even upon inanimates, must ever *contradict* the nature of things.

Opinions indeed, altho' *erroneous*, if they either *are*, or *have* been universally received, may afford sufficient foundation for a Fable. The mandrake, *here*, may be made to utter groans ; and the dying swan to pour forth her elegy. The sphinx and the phoenix, the syren and the centaur, have all the existence that is requisite for fable. Nay, the goblin, the fairy, and even the man in the moon, may have each his province allotted him, so it be not an *improper* one. Here the notoriety of opinion supplies the place of fact, and in *this manner* truth may fairly be deduced from falsehood.

Concerning the incidents proper for Fable, it is a rule without exception, that they ought always to be *few* ; it being foreign to the nature of this composition, to admit of much variety. Yet a Fable with only *one* single incident, may possibly appear too naked. If Esop and Phædrus are herein sometimes too sparing, Fontaine and La Motte are as often too profuse. In this, as in most other matters, a medium certainly is best. In a word, the incidents should not only be

be few but short; and like those in the Fables of “the swallow and other birds,” “the miller and his son,” and, “the court and country mouse,” they must naturally arise out of subject, and serve to illustrate and enforce the Moral.

S E C T. III.

Of the Persons, Characters, and Sentiments of Fable.

THE race of animals *first* present themselves, as the proper actors in this little drama. They are indeed a species that approaches, in many respects, so near to our own, that we need only lend them *speech*, in order to produce a striking resemblance. It would however be unreasonable, to expect a strict and universal similitude. There is a certain *measure* and *degree* of analogy, with which the most discerning reader will rest contented: for instance, he will accept the *properties* of animals, altho’ *necessary* and *invariable*, as the images of our *inclinations*, tho’ never so *free*. To require more than this, were to sap the very foundations of allegory; and even to deprive ourselves of half the pleasure that flows from poetry in general.

Solomon sends us to the ant, to learn the wisdom of industry: and our inimitable ethic poet introduces nature herself as giving us a *similar* kind of counsel.

*Thus then to Man the voice of Nature spake ;
 “ Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take—
 “ There all the forms of social union find,
 “ And thence, let reason late instruct mankind.”*

He

He supposes that animals in their *native* characters, *without* the advantages of speech and reason which are assigned them by the Fabulists, may in regard to *Morals* as well as *Arts*, become examples to the human race. Indeed, I am afraid we have so far deviated into ascetic appetites and fantastick manners, as to find the expediency of copying from *them*, that simplicity we ourselves have lost. If animals, in themselves may be thus exemplary, how much more may they be made instructive, under the direction of an able Fabulist; who by conferring upon them the gift of language, contrives to make their instincts more intelligible and their examples more determinate!

But these are not his *only* actors. The Fabulist has one advantage above all other writers whatsoever; as all the works both of art and nature are more immediately at his disposal. He has, in this respect, a liberty not allowed to epick, or dramatick writers; who are undoubtedly more limited in the choice of persons to be employed. He has authority to press into his service, every kind of existence under heaven: not only beasts, birds, insects, and all the animal creation; but flowers, shrubs, trees, and all the tribe of vegetables. Even mountains, fossils, minerals, and the inanimate works of nature, discourse articulately at his command, and act the part which he assigns them. The virtues, vices, and every *property* of beings, receive from him a *local habitation and a name*. In short he may personify, bestow life, speech and action on whatever he thinks proper.

It is easy to imagine what a source of *novelty* and *variety* this must open, to a genius capable of conceiving, and of employing, these ideal per-

persons in a proper manner : what an opportunity it affords him to diversify his images, and to treat the fancy with change of *objects* ; while he strengthens the understanding, or regulates the passions, by a succession of *Truths*. To raise beings like these into a state of action and intelligence, gives the Fabulist an undoubted claim to that *first* character of the poet, a *Creator*. I rank him not, as I said before, with the writers of epick or dramatick poems ; but the maker of pins or needles is as much an artist, as an anchor-smith : and a painter in miniature may shew as much skill, as he who paints in the largest proportions.

When these persons are once raised, we must carefully enjoin them proper tasks ; and assign them sentiments and language suitable to their several natures, and respective properties.

A raven should not be extolled for her voice, nor a bear be represented with an elegant shape. 'Twere a very obvious instance of absurdity, to paint an hare, cruel ; or a wolf, compassionate. An ass were but ill qualified to be General of an army, tho' he may well enough serve perhaps for one of the trumpeters. But so long as popular opinion allows to the lion, magnanimity ; rage, to the tyger ; strength, to the mule ; cunning, to the fox ; and buffoonery, to the monkey ; why may not they support the characters of an Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, Ulysses and Therfites ? The truth is, when Moral actions are with judgment attributed to the brute creation, we scarce perceive that nature is at all violated by the Fabulist. He appears, at *most*, to have only translated their language. His lions, wolves, and foxes, *behave* and *argue* as those creatures *would*, had they originally been en-

endowed with the human faculties of speech and reason.

But greater art is yet required, whenever we personify *inanimate* beings. Here the copy so far deviates from the great lines of nature, that without the nicest care, reason will revolt against the fiction. However, beings of *this* sort, managed ingeniously and with address, recommend the Fabulist's invention by the grace of novelty and of variety. Indeed the analogy between things natural and artificial, animal and inanimate, is often so very striking, that we can, with seeming propriety, give passions and sentiments to every individual part of existence. Appearance favours the deception. The vine may be *enamoured* of the elm; her embraces testify her passion. The swelling mountain may naturally enough be *delivered* of a mouse. The gourd may reproach the pine, and the sky-rocket, insult the stars. The axe may solicit a new handle of the forest; and the moon, in her *female* character, request a fashionable garment. Here is nothing incongruous; nothing that shocks the reader with impropriety. On the other hand, were the axe to desire a perriwig, and the moon petition for a new pair of boots; probability would *then* be violated, and the absurdity become too glaring.

S E C T. IV.

On the Language of Fable.

THE most beautiful Fables that ever were invented, may be disfigured by the *Language* in which they are cloathed. Of this, poor Etop, in some of his English dresses, affords a melan-

melancholy proof. The ordinary stile of Fable should be *familiar*, but also *elegant*. Were I to *instance* any stile that I should prefer on this occasion, it should be that of Mr. *Addison's* little tales in the *Spectator*. That ease and simplicity, that conciseness and propriety, that subdued and decent humour he so remarkably discovers there ; seem to have qualified him for a Fabulist, almost beyond any other writer. But to return.

The *Familiar*, says Mr. La Motte, to whose ingenious *Essay* I have often been obliged in this discourse, is the general tone, or accent of Fable. It was thought sufficient, on its first appearance, to lend the animals our most common language. Nor indeed have they any extraordinary *pretensions* to the sublime ; it being requisite they should *speak* with the same simplicity that they *behave*.

The *familiar* also is more proper for insinuation, than the *elevated* ; this being the language of *reflection*, as the former is the voice of *sentiment*. We guard ourselves against the one, but lie open to the other ; and instruction will always the most effectually sway us, when it appears least jealous of its rights and privileges.

The *familiar* stile however that is here required, notwithstanding that appearance of *Ease* which is its character, is perhaps more difficult to write, than the more *elevated* or *sublime*. A writer more readily perceives when he has risen above the common language, than he perceives in speaking this language, whether he has made the choice that is most suitable to the occasion : and it is nevertheless, upon *this happy choice* depends all the charm of the *familiar*. Moreover, the *elevated* stile deceives and seduces, altho' it *be not* the best chosen ; whereas the *familiar* can
pro-

procure itself no sort of respect, if it be not easy, natural, just, delicate, and unaffected. A Fabulist must therefore bestow great attention upon his style : and even labour it so much the more, that it may appear to have cost him no pains at all.

The authority of *Fontaine* justifies these opinions in regard to style. His Fables are perhaps the best examples of the *genteel familiar*, as Sir Roger L'Estrange affords the grossest, of the *indelicate and low*. When we read that “ while the frog and the mouse were disputing it at sword's point, down comes a kite powdering upon them in the interim, and gobbets up both together to part the fray.” And “ where the fox reproaches a bevy of jolly gossiping wenches making merry over a dish of pullets, that, if he but peep'd into a henroost, they always made a bawling with *their dogs and their bastards* ; while you yourselves, says he, can lie *stuffing your guts* with your hens and your capons, and not a word of the pudding :” This may be familiar, but is also *coarse and vulgar* ; and cannot fail to disgust a reader that has the least degree of taste or delicacy.

The style of Fable then must be simple and familiar ; and it must *likewise* be correct and elegant. By the former, I would advise that it should not be loaded with figure and metaphor ; that the disposition of words be natural ; the turn of sentences easy ; and their construction unembarrassed. By elegance, I would exclude all coarse and provincial terms ; all affected and puerile conceits ; all obsolete and pedantick phrases. To this I would adjoin, as the word perhaps implies, a certain finishing polish, which gives a grace and spirit to the whole ; and which, tho' it have always the

appearance of nature, is almost ever the *effect* of art.

But, notwithstanding all that has been said, there are some occasions on which it is allowable, and even expedient to change the style. The language of a Fable must rise or fall in conformity to the subject. A *Lion*, when introduced in his regal capacity, must hold discourse in a strain somewhat more elevated than a *Country-Mouse*. The lioness then becomes his *Queen*, and the beasts of the forest are called his *subjects* : a method that offers at once to the imagination, both the *animal* and the *person* he is designed to represent. Again, the buffoon-monkey should avoid that pomp of phrase, which the owl employs as her best pretence to wisdom. Unless the style be thus judiciously varied, it will be impossible to preserve a just distinction of character.

Descriptions, at once concise and pertinent, add a grace to Fable ; but are then most happy, when included in the action : whereof the Fable of *Boreas and the Sun* affords us an example. An *epithet* well chosen is often a description, in *itself* ; and so much the more agreeable, as it the less retards us in our pursuit of the catastrophe.

I might enlarge much further on the subject, but perhaps I may appear to have been too diffuse already. Let it suffice to hint that little *strokes* of *humour*, when arising naturally from the subject ; and *incidental reflections*, when kept in due subordination to the principal, add a value to these compositions. These latter however should be employed very sparingly, and with great address ; be very few and very short : It is scarcely enough that they naturally *spring out*.

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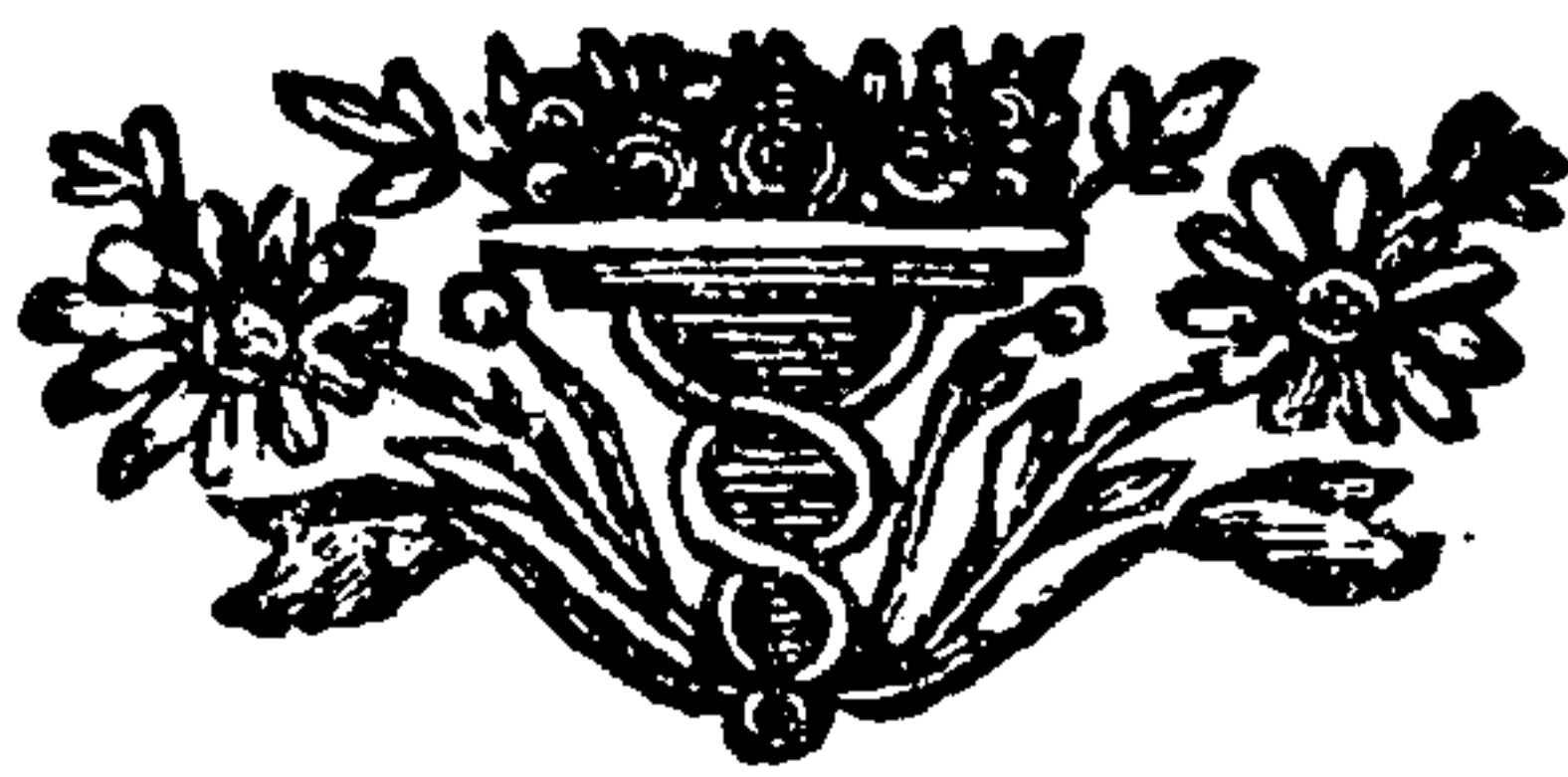
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out.

out of the subject : they should be such as to appear *necessary* and *essential* parts of the Fable. And when these embellishments, pleasing in *themselves*, tend to illustrate the *main action*, they then afford that nameless grace remarkable in Fontaine and some few others ; and which persons of the best discernment will more easily *conceive*, than they can *explain*.

R. DODSLEY.



THE P R E F A C E.

THE fables of Esop have always been esteemed the best lessons for youth, as best adapted to convey the most useful maxims, in the most agreeable manner. Accordingly, many writers, both in verse and prose, have endeavoured to cloath them in an English dress. It would ill become the Author of this work to animadvert upon their labours: but he thinks it may be said with truth, and he hopes also with modesty, that nothing of this kind which has been published in prose, can justly discourage him from the present undertaking.

In forming this collection, he has endeavoured to distinguish, by two separate books, the respective compositions of the earlier and later mythogolists; and he trusts it will not be found that he has often been mistaken in this

P R E F A C E.

this regulation, though an error of that kind might perhaps appear of no great importance. His principal aim was to select such Fables as would make the strongest and most useful impressions on the minds of youth; and then to offer them in such unaffected language, as might have some tendency to improve their style. If in this he hath at all succeeded, the work, it is presum'd, will not be unserviceable to young readers, nor wholly unentertaining to persons of maturer judgment.

To these he has ventured to add a third Book, consisting entirely of original Fables: and he offers it to the publick with all the diffidence which ought to accompany every modern production, when it appears in conjunction with writings of established reputation. Indeed, whatever hopes he has, that the present work may be favourably received, arise chiefly from the consideration, that he has been assisted in it by gentlemen of the most distinguished abilities; and that several, both of the old and the new Fables,
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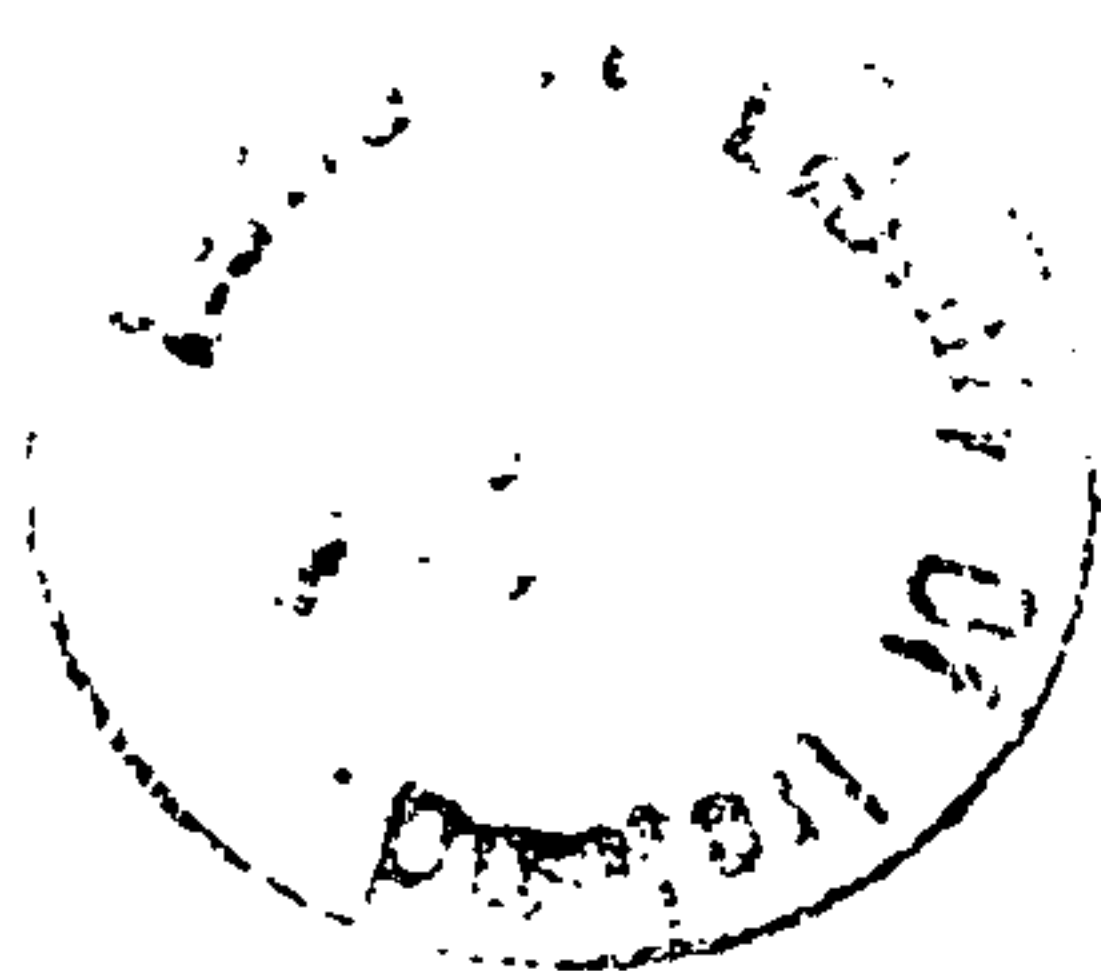
P R E F A C E.


are not written by himself, but by authors, with whom it is an honour to be connected; and who having condescended to favour him with their assistance, have given him an opportunity of making some atonement for his own defects.

The life of Esop prefixed to this collection, is taken from Mons. de Meziriac, a very learned and ingenious Frenchman; who being disgusted with the gross forgeries of that lying monk Planudes, published in 1632 the best account he could collect from antient writers of good authority. But this little book, soon after became so extreamly scarce, that Mons. Bayle, in the first edition of his dictionary, laments he never could get a sight of it; Dr. Bentley in his dissertation on Esop's Fables makes much the same complaint; nor does it appear that Sir Roger Lestrange or Dr. Croxal, ever so much as heard of Meziriac's name. The work indeed in the original has continued equally scarce to this day; but an English translation of it falling into the writer's hands,

P R E F A C E.

hands, he hath endeavoured in some measure to correct the language; adding notes from several authors, particularly from Boyle's and Bentley's controversy on the subject; and he is persuaded that the judicious reader will not condemn him for adopting it, instead of the fictitious and absurd relation of Planudes.





F A B L E S.

B O O K I.

From the A N C I E N T S.

F A B L E I.

The Trees and the Bramble.

TH E Israelites, ever murmuring and discontented under the reign of Jehovah, were desirous of having a king, like the rest of the nations. They offered the kingdom to Gideon their deliverer; to him, and to his posterity after him: he generously refused their offer, and reminded them, that Jehovah was their king. When Gideon was dead, Abimelech, his son by a concubine, slew all his other sons to the number of seventy, Joatham alone escaping; and by the assistance of the Shechemites made himself king. Joatham, to represent to them their folly, and to shew them, that the most deserving are generally the least ambitious, whereas the worthless grasp at power with eagerness, and exercise it with insolence and tyranny, spake to them in the following manner.

Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, so may God hearken unto you. The trees grown weary of the state of freedom and equality in which God had placed them, met together to chuse and to anoint a king over them: and they said to the
B olive-

olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Shall I quit my fatness wherewith God and man is honoured, to disquiet myself with the cares of government, and rule over the trees? And they said unto the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Shall I bid adieu to my sweetness and my pleasant fruit, to take upon me the painful charge of royalty, and to be set over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us. But the vine said also unto them, Shall I leave my wine which honoureth God and cheareth man, to bring upon myself nothing but trouble and anxiety, and to become king of the trees? we are happy in our present lot: seek some other to reign over you. Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto them, I will be your king; come ye all under my shadow, and be safe; obey me, and I will grant you my protection. But if you obey me not, out of the bramble shall come forth a fire, which shall devour even the cedars of Lebanon.

F A B L E II.

The Frogs petitioning Jupiter for a King.

AS Esop was travelling over Greece, he happened to pass thro' Athens just after Pisistratus had abolished the popular state, and usurped a sovereign power; when perceiving that the Athenians bore the yoke, tho' mild and easy, with much impatience, he related to them the following fable.

The commonwealth of frogs, a discontented variable race, weary of liberty, and fond of change, petitioned Jupiter to grant them a king. The good-natured deity, in order to indulge this their request, with as little mischief to the petitioners

as possible, threw them down a log. At first they regarded their new monarch with great reverence, and kept from him at a most respectful distance: but perceiving his tame and peaceable disposition, they by degrees ventured to approach him with more familiarity, till at length they conceived for him the utmost contempt. In this disposition, they renewed their request to Jupiter, and intreated him to bestow upon them another king. The Thunderer in his wrath sent them a crane, who no sooner took possession of his new dominions, than he began to devour his subjects one after another in a most capricious and tyrannical manner. They were now far more dissatisfied than before; when applying to Jupiter a third time, they were dismissed with being told, that the evil they complained of they had imprudently brought upon themselves; and that they had no other remedy now but to submit to it with patience.

F A B L E III.

The Wolf and the Shepherds.

HOW apt men are to condemn in others, what they practise themselves without scruple!

A wolf, says Plutarch, peeping into a hut, where a company of shepherds were regaling themselves with a joint of mutton; Lord, said he, what a clamour would these men have raised, if they had caught me at such a banquet!

F A B L E IV.

The Belly and the Members.

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, a Roman consul, being deputed by the senate to appease a dangerous tumult and sedition of the people, who refused to pay the taxes necessary for carrying on the business of the state; convinced them of their folly, by delivering to them the following fable.

My friends and countrymen, said he, attend to my words. It once happened that the members of the human body, taking some exception at the conduct of the belly, resolved, no longer to grant him the usual supplies. The tongue first, in a seditious speech, aggravated their grievances; and after highly extolling the activity and diligence of the hands and feet, set forth how hard and unreasonable it was, that the fruits of their labour should be squandered away upon the insatiable cravings of a fat and indolent paunch, which was entirely useless, and unable to do any thing towards helping himself. This speech was received with unanimous applause by all the members. Immediately the hands declared they would work no more; the feet determined to carry no farther the load of guts with which they had hitherto been oppressed; nay, the very teeth refused to prepare a single morsel more for his use. In this distress, the belly besought them to consider maturely, and not foment so senseless a rebellion. There is none of you, says he, but may be sensible that whatever you bestow upon me, is immediately converted to your use, and dispersed by me for the good of you all into every limb. But he remonstrated in vain; for during the clamours of passion,

passion, the voice of reason is always unregarded. It being therefore impossible for him to quiet the tumult, he was starved for want of their assistance, and the body wasted away to a skeleton. The limbs, grown weak and languid, were sensible at last of their error, and would fain have returned to their respective duty; but it was now too late, death had taken possession of the whole, and they all perished together.

F A B L E V.

*The Fox and the * Swallow.*

A R I S T O T L E informs us that the following fable was spoken by Esop to the Samians, on a debate upon changing their ministers, who were accused of plundering the commonwealth.

A fox swimming across a river, happened to be entangled in some weeds that grew near the shore, from which he was unable to extricate himself. As he lay thus exposed to whole swarms of flies, who were galling him and sucking his blood; a swallow observing his distress, kindly offered to drive them away. By no means, said the fox; for if these should be chased away, who are already sufficiently gorged, another more hungry swarm would succeed, and I should be robbed of every remaining drop of blood in my veins.

* Instead of the swallow, it was originally a hedge-hog: but as that creature seems very unfit for the business of driving away flies, 'twas thought more proper to substitute the swallow.

F A B L E VI.

The Fox and the Raven.

A Fox observing a raven perched on the branch of a tree, with a fine piece of cheese in her mouth, immediately began to consider how he might possess himself of so delicious a morsel. Dear madam, said he, I am extremely glad to have the pleasure of seeing you this morning : your beautiful shape, and shining feathers, are the delight of my eyes ; and would you condescend to favour me with a song, I doubt not but your voice is equal to the rest of your accomplishments. Deceived with this flattering speech, the transported raven opened her mouth, in order to give him a specimen of her pipe, when down dropt the cheese : which the fox immediately snatching up, bore away in triumph, leaving the raven to lament her credulous vanity at her leisure.

F A B L E VII.

The Fox and the Stork.

THE fox, tho' in general more inclined to roguery than wit, had once a strong inclination to play the wag with his neighbour the stork. He accordingly invited her to dinner in great form ; but when it came upon the table, the stork found it consisted intirely of different soups, served up in broad shallow dishes, so that she could only dip in the end of her bill, but could not possibly satisfy her hunger. The fox lapped it up very readily, and every now and then, addressing himself to his guest, desired to know how she liked her entertainment ; hoped that every thing was seasoned to her mind ; and protested he was very sorry to

to see her eat so sparingly. The stork, perceiving she was played upon, took no notice, but pretended to like every dish extremely: and at parting pressed the fox so earnestly to return her visit, that he could not in civility refuse. When the day arrived, he repaired to his appointment; but to his great mortification, when dinner appeared, he found it composed of minced meat, served up in long narrow-necked glasses; so that he was only tantalized with the sight of what it was impossible for him to taste. The stork thrust in her long bill, and helped herself very plentifully; then turning to Reynard, who was eagerly licking the outside of a jarr where some sauce had been spilled—I am very glad, said she smiling, that you seem to have so good an appetite; I hope you will make as hearty a dinner at my table as I did the other day at yours. Reynard hung down his head, and looked very much displeased.—Nay, nay, said the stork, don't pretend to be out of humour about the matter: they that cannot take a jest, should never make one.

F A B L E VIII.

The Daw with borrowed Feathers.

WHEN a pert young templar, or city apprentice, sets up for a fine gentleman, with the assistance of an embroidered waistcoat and Dresden ruffles, but without one qualification proper to the character, how frequently does it happen, that he is laughed at by his equals, and despised by those whom he presumed to imitate!

A pragmatical jackdaw was vain enough to imagine, that he wanted nothing but the dress, to render him as elegant a bird as the peacock. Puffed up with this wise conceit, he plumed himself with

a sufficient quantity of their most beautiful feathers, and in this borrowed garb, forsaking his old companions, endeavoured to pass for a peacock. But he no sooner attempted to associate with these genteel creatures, than an affected strut betrayed the vain pretender. The offended peacocks, plucking from him their degraded feathers, soon stripped him of his gentility, reduced him to a mere jackdaw, and drove him back to his brethren; by whom he was now equally despised, and justly punished with general derision and contempt.

F A B L E IX.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

WHEN cruelty and injustice are armed with power, and determined on oppression, the strongest pleas of innocence are preferred in vain.

A wolf and a lamb were accidentally quenching their thirst together at the same rivulet. The wolf stood towards the head of the stream, and the lamb at some distance below. The injurious beast, resolved on a quarrel, fiercely demands—How dare you disturb the water which I am drinking? The poor lamb, all trembling, replies, How, I beseech you, can that possibly be the case, since the current sets from you to me? Disconcerted by the force of truth, he changes the accusation. Six months ago, says he, you vilely slandered me. Impossible, returns the lamb, for I was not then born. No matter, it was your father then, or some of your relations; and immediately seizing the innocent lamb, he tore him to pieces.

F A B L E X.

The Mountain in Labour.

A Rumour once prevailed, that a neighbouring mountain was in labour; it was affirmed that she had been heard to utter prodigious groans; and a general expectation had been raised, that some extraordinary birth was at hand. Multitudes flocked with much eagerness to be witnesses of the wonderful event: one expecting her to be delivered of a giant; another of some enormous monster; and all were suspended in earnest expectation of somewhat grand and astonishing. When, after waiting with great impatience a considerable time, behold, out crept a little ridiculous mouse.

F A B L E XI.

The Boys and the Frogs.

ON the margin of a large lake, which was inhabited by a great number of frogs, a company of boys happened to be at play. Their diversion was duck and drake; and whole volleys of stones were whirled into the water, to the great annoyance and danger of the poor terrified frogs. At length, one of the most hardy, lifting his head above the surface of the lake; Ah, dear children, said he, why will ye learn so soon the cruel practices of your race? Consider, I beseech ye, that tho' this may be sport to you, it is death to us.

F A B L E XII.

The Lark and her Young.

A Lark having built her nest in a field of corn, it grew ripe before her young were well able to fly. Apprehensive for their safety, she enjoined them, while she went out in order to provide for their subsistence, to listen very attentively, if they should hear any discourse concerning the reaping of the field. At her return they told her, that the farmer and his son had been there, and had agreed to send to some of their neighbours, to assist in cutting it down the next day. And so they depend, it seems, upon neighbours, said the mother: very well: then I think we have no occasion to be afraid of to-morrow. The next day she went out, and left with them the same injunction as before. When she returned, they acquainted her that the farmer and his son had again been there, but as none of their neighbours came to their assistance, they had deferred reaping till the next day, and intended to send for help to their friends and relations. I think we may still venture another day, says the mother; but however be careful as before, to let me know what passes in my absence. They now inform her, that the farmer and his son had a third time visited the field; and finding that neither friend nor relation had regarded their summons, they were determined to come the next morning and cut it down themselves. Nay then, replied the lark, it is time to think of removing: for as they now depend only upon themselves for doing their own business, it will undoubtedly be performed.

F A B L E XIII.

The Stag drinking.

A Stag quenching his thirst in a clear lake, was struck with the beauty of his horns which he saw reflected in the water. At the same time, observing the extreme slenderness of his legs; What pity it is, said he, that so fine a creature should be furnished with so despicable a set of spindle shanks! what a truly noble animal I should be, were my legs in any degree answerable to my horns! In the midst of this soliloquy, he was alarmed with the cry of a pack of hounds. He immediately flies over the forest, and left his pursuers so far behind, that he might probably have escaped; but taking into a thick wood, his horns were entangled in the branches, where he was held till the hounds came up, and tore him in pieces. In his last moments, he thus exclaimed — How ill do we judge of our own true advantages! the legs which I despised would have borne me away in safety, had not my favourite antlers betrayed me to ruin.

F A B L E XIV.

The Swallow and other Birds.

A Swallow observing a farmer employed in sowing hemp, called the little birds together, informed them what he was about, and told them that hemp was the material from which the nets, so fatal to the feathered race, were composed: advising them unanimously to join in picking it up, in order to prevent the consequences. The birds, either disbelieving his information, or neglecting his

his advice, gave themselves no trouble about the matter. In a little time the hemp appeared above ground: the friendly swallow again addressed himself to them, told them it was not yet too late, provided they would immediately set about the work, before the seeds had taken too deep root. But they still rejecting his advice, he forsook their society, repaired for safety to towns and cities, and there built his habitations and kept his residence. One day, as he was skimming along the street, he happened to see a large parcel of those very birds, imprisoned in a cage, on the shoulders of a bird-catcher. Unhappy wretches, said he, you now feel the punishment of your former neglect. But those, who, having no foresight of their own, despise the wholesome admonitions of their friends, deserve the mischiefs which their own obstinacy or negligence brings upon their heads.

F A B L E X V.

The Ass and the Lap-dog.

AN ass who lived in the same family with a favourite lap-dog, observing the superior degree of affection which the little minion enjoyed, imagined he had nothing more to do, to obtain an equal share in their good graces, than to imitate the lap-dog's playful and endearing caresses. Accordingly, he began to frisk about before his master, kicking up his heels and braying, in an awkward affectation of wantonness and pleasantry. This strange behaviour could not fail of raising much laughter; which the ass mistaking for approbation and encouragement, he proceeded to leap upon his master's breast, and began very familiarly to lick his face: but he was presently convinced by the force of a good cudgel, that what is spritely and agreeable

ble in one, may in another be justly censured as rude and impertinent; and that the surest way to gain esteem, is for every one to act suitably to his own natural genius and character.

F A B L E XVI.

The Lion and the Mouse.

A Lion by accident laid his paw upon a poor innocent mouse. The frightened little creature, imagining she was just going to be devoured, begged hard for her life, urged that clemency was the fairest attribute of power, and earnestly intreated his majesty, not to stain his illustrious claws, with the blood of so insignificant an animal: upon which, the lion very generously set her at liberty. It happened a few days afterwards, that the lion, ranging for his prey, fell into the toils of the hunter. The mouse heard his roarings, knew the voice of her benefactor, and immediately repairing to his assistance, gnawed in pieces the meshes of the net, and by delivering her preserver convinced him, that there is no creature so much below another, but may have it in his power to return a good office.

F A B L E XVII.

The Wolf and the Crane.

A Wolf having with too much greediness swallowed a bone, it unfortunately stuck in his throat; and in the violence of his pain he applied to several animals, earnestly intreating them to extract it. None cared to hazard the dangerous experiment, except the crane, who persuaded by his solemn promises of a gratuity, ventured to thrust her enormous length

of

of neck down his throat, and successfully performed the operation. When claiming the recompence; See the unreasonableness of some creatures, replied the wolf: have I not suffered thee safely to draw thy neck out of my jaws, and hast thou the conscience to demand a further reward!

F A B L E XVIII.

The Countryman and the Snake.

AN honest countryman observed a snake lying under a hedge, almost frozen to death. He was moved with compassion; and bringing it home, he laid it near the fire, and gave it some new milk. Thus fed and cherished, the creature presently began to revive: but no sooner had he recovered strength enough to do mischief, than he sprung upon the countryman's wife, bit one of his children, and in short, threw the whole family into confusion and terror. Ungrateful wretch! said the man, thou hast sufficiently taught me how ill-judged it is, to confer benefits on the worthless and undeserving. So saying, he snatched up a hatchet, and cut the snake in pieces.

F A B L E XIX.

The Dog and the Shadow.

AN hungry spaniel, having stolen a piece of flesh from a butcher's shop, was carrying it across a river. The water being clear, and the sun shining brightly, he saw his own image in the stream, and fancied it to be another dog, with a more delicious morsel: upon which, unjustly and greedily opening his jaws to snatch at the shadow, he lost the substance.

FABLE XX.

The Sun and the Wind.

PHœbus and Æolus had once a dispute, which of them could soonest prevail with a certain traveller to part with his cloak. Æolus began the attack, and assaulted him with great violence. But the man wrapped his cloak still closer about him, doubled his efforts to keep it, and went on his way. And now, Phœbus darted his warm insinuating rays, which melting our traveller by degrees, at length obliged him to throw aside that cloak, which all the rage of Æolus could not compel him to resign. Learn hence, said Phœbus to the blustering god, that soft and gentle means will often accomplish, what force and fury can never effect.

FABLE XXI.

The Wolf and the Mastiff.

A Lean, half-starved wolf inadvertently strolled in the way of a strong well-fed mastiff. The wolf being much too weak to act upon the offensive, thought it most prudent to accost honest Towser in a friendly manner: and among other civilities, very complaisantly congratulated him on his goodly appearance. Why, yes, returned the mastiff, I am indeed in tolerable case; and if you will follow me, you may soon be altogether in as good a plight. The wolf pricked up his ears at the proposal, and requested to be informed what he must do to earn such plentiful meals. Very little, replied the mastiff; only drive away beggars, care for my master, and be civil to his family. To these conditions the hungry wolf had no objection,

tion, and very readily consented to follow his new acquaintance where-ever he would conduct him. As they were trotting along, the wolf observed that the hair was worn in a circle round his friend's neck; which raised his curiosity to enquire what was the occasion of it? Nothing, answered the mastiff, or a mere trifle; perhaps the collar to which my chain is sometimes fastened. Chain! replied the wolf, with much surprize; it should seem then that you are not permitted to rove about where and when you please. Not always, returned Towser, hanging down his head; but what does that signify? It signifies so much, rejoined the wolf, that I am resolved to have no share in your dinners: half a meal with liberty, is in my estimation preferable to a full one without.

F A B L E XXII.

Fortune and the School-boy.

A School-boy, fatigued with play, threw himself down by the brink of a deep pit, where he fell fast asleep. Fortune happening to pass by, and seeing him in this dangerous situation, kindly gave him a tap on the shoulder: My dear child, said she, if you had fallen into this pit, I should have borne the blame, tho' in fact the accident would have been wholly owing to your own carelessness.

Misfortune, said a celebrated cardinal, is but another word for imprudence. This maxim is by no means absolutely true: certain however, it is, that mankind suffer more evils from their own imprudence, than from events which are not in their power to controll.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Frog and the Ox.

A Frog being wonderfully struck with the size and majesty of an ox that was grazing in the marshes, could not forbear endeavouring to expand herself to the same portly magnitude. After puffing and swelling for some time: “What think you, sister,” said she, “will this do?” Far from it. “Will this?” By no means. “But this surely will.” Nothing like it. In short, after many ridiculous efforts to the same fruitless purpose, the simple frog burst her skin, and miserably expired upon the spot.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Lion and other Beasts hunting in Partnership.

A Leopard, a lynx, and a wolf were ambitious of the honour of hunting with the lion. His savage majesty graciously condescended to their desire, and it was agreed that they should all have an equal share in whatever might be taken. They scour the forest, are unanimous in the pursuit, and, after a very fine chase, pull down a noble stag. It was divided with great dexterity by the lynx, into four equal parts; but just as each was going to secure his share—Hold, says the lion, let no one presume to serve himself, till he hath heard our just and reasonable claims. I seize upon the first quarter by virtue of my prerogative; the second I think is due to my superior conduct and courage; I cannot forego the third on account of the necessities of my den; and if any one is inclined to dispute my right to the fourth, let him speak.

Awed

Awed by the majesty of his frown, and the terror of his claws, they silently withdrew, resolving never to hunt again but with their equals.

F A B L E XXV.

The Ant and the Fly.

AN ant and a fly had once a ridiculous contest about precedence, and were arguing which of the two was the more honourable: such disputes most frequently happen amongst the lowest and most worthless creatures. The fly expressed great resentment, that such a poor, crawling insect should presume to lie basking in the same sunshine, with one so much her superior! Thou hast not surely the insolence, said she, to imagine thyself of an equal rank with me. I am none of your low mechanic creatures who live by their industry; but enjoy in plenty, and without labour, every thing that is truly delicious. I place myself uncontrouled upon the heads of kings; I kiss with freedom the lips of beauties; and feast upon the choicest sacrifices that are offered to the gods. To eat with the gods, replied the ant, and to enjoy the favours of the fair and the powerful, would be great honour indeed, to one who was an invited or a welcome guest; but an impertinent intruder, who is driven out with aversion and contempt wherever he appears, has not much cause methinks to boast of his privileges. And as to the honour of not labouring for your subsistence; here too your boast is only your disgrace; for hence it is, that one half of the year you are destitute even of the common necessaries of life; whilst I, at the same time retiring to the hoarded granaries, which my honest industry has filled, enjoy every satisfaction, independent

pendent of the favour either of beauties or of kings.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Bear and the two Friends.

TWO friends, setting out together upon a journey which led through a dangerous desert, mutually promised to assist each other, in whatever manner they might be assaulted. They had not proceeded far, before they perceived a bear making towards them with great rage. There were no hopes in flight; but one of them, being very active, sprung up into a tree; upon which, the other, throwing himself flat on the ground, held his breath, and pretended to be dead; remembered to have heard it asserted, that this creature will not prey upon a lifeless carcass. The bear came up, and after smelling to him some time, left him, and went on. When he was fairly out of sight and hearing, the hero from the tree calls out—Well, my friend, what said the bear? He seemed to whisper you very closely. He did so, replied the other; and gave me this good piece of advice, never to associate with a wretch, who in the hour of danger will desert his friend.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Bull and the Gnat.

A Conceited gnat, fully persuaded of his own importance, having placed himself on the horn of a bull, expressed great uneasiness lest his weight should be incommodious; and with much ceremony begged the bull's pardon for the liberty he had taken; assuring him that he would immediately

diately remove, if he pressed too hard upon him. Give yourself no uneasiness on that account, replied the bull, I beseech you : for as I never perceived when you sat down, I shall probably not miss you whenever you rise up.

F A B L E XXVIII.

The Wasps and the Bees.

Pretenders of every kind are best detected by appealing to their works.

Some honey-combs being claimed by a swarm of wasps, the right owners protested against their demand, and the cause was referred to a hornet. Witnesses being examined, they deposed that certain winged creatures, who had a loud hum, were of a yellowish colour, and somewhat like bees, were observed a considerable time hovering about the place where this nest was found. But this did not sufficiently decide the question ; for these characteristics, the hornet observed, agreed no less with the bees than with the wasps. At length, a sensible old bee offered to put the matter upon this decisive issue ; Let a place be appointed, said he, by the court, for the plaintiffs and defendants to work in : it will then soon appear which of us are capable of forming such regular cells, and afterwards of filling them with so delicious a fluid. The wasps refusing to agree to this proposal, sufficiently convinced the judge on which side the right lay, and he decreed the honeycomb accordingly.

F A B L E XXIX.

The old Man and Death.

A Feeble old man, quite spent with carrying^a a burthen of sticks, which with much labour^r he

he had gathered in a neighbouring wood, called upon Death to release him from the fatigues he endured. Death hearing the invocation, was immediately at his elbow, and asked him what he wanted. Frighted and trembling at the unexpected appearance---O good sir! said he, my burthen had like to have slipped from me, and being unable to recover it myself, I only implored your assistance to lay it on my shoulders again.

F A B L E XXX.

The Court and Country Mouse.

A Contented country-mouse had once the honour to receive a visit from an old acquaintance belonging to the court. The country-mouse, extremely glad to see her guest, very hospitably set before her the best cheese and bacon which her cottage afforded, and as to their beverage, it was the purest water from the spring. The repast was homely indeed, but the welcome hearty: they sat and chattered away the evening together very agreeably, and then retired in peace and quietness each to her little cell. The next morning when the guest was to take her leave, she kindly pressed her country friend to accompany her; setting forth in very pompous terms, the great elegance and plenty in which they lived at court. The country-mouse was easily prevailed upon, and they set out together. It was late in the evening when they arrived at the palace; however, in one of the rooms, they found the remains of a sumptuous entertainment. There were creams, and jellies, and sweetmeats; and every thing, in short, of the most delicate kind: the cheese was Parmesan, and they wetted their whiskers in exquisite champain. But
before

before they had half finished their repast, they were alarmed with the barking and scratching of a lap-dog; then the mewling of a cat frightened them almost to death; by and bye, a whole train of servants burst into the room, and every thing was swept away in an instant. Ah! my dear friend, said the country-mouse, as soon as she had recovered courage enough to speak, if your fine living is thus interrupted with fears and dangers, let me return to my plain food, and my peaceful cottage: for what is elegance without ease; or plenty, with an aching heart?

F A B L E XXXI.

The Fox and the Goat.

A Fox and goat travelling together, in a very sultry day, found themselves exceedingly thirsty, when looking round the country in order to discover a place where they might probably meet with water, they at length descryed a clear spring at the bottom of a pit. They both eagerly descended, and having sufficiently allayed their thirst, it was time to consider how they should get out. Many expedients for that purpose were mutually proposed, and rejected. At last the crafty fox cried out with great joy, I have a thought just struck into my mind, which I am confident will extricate us out of our difficulty: do you, said he to the goat, only rear yourself up upon your hinder legs, and rest your fore feet against the side of the pit. In this posture, I will climb up to your head, from whence I shall be able, with a spring, to reach the top: and when I am once there, you are sensible it will be very easy for me to pull you out by the horns. The simple goat liked the proposal well; and immediately placed himself as directed: by
means

means of which, the fox without much difficulty, gained the top. And now, said the goat, give me the assistance you promised. Thou old fool, replied the fox, had'st thou but half as much wit as beard, thou would'st never have believed that I would hazard my own life to save thine. However, I will leave with thee a piece of advice, which may be of service to thee hereafter, if thou should'st have the good fortune to make thy escape: "Never venture into a pit again, before thou hast well considered how to get out of it."

F A B L E XXXII.

The Farmer, the Cranes, and the Stork.

A Stork was unfortunately drawn into company with some cranes, who were just setting out on a party of pleasure as they called it, which in truth was to rob the fish-ponds of a neighbouring farmer. Our simple stork agreed to make one; and it so happened, that they were all taken in the fact. The cranes having been old offenders, had very little to say for themselves, and were presently dispatched: but the stork pleaded hard for his life; he urged that it was his first fault, that he was not naturally addicted to stealing fish, that he was famous for piety to his parents, and in short, for many other virtues. Your piety and virtue, said the farmer, may for aught I know, be exemplary; but your being in company with thieves renders it very suspicious; and you must therefore submit with patience to share the same punishment with your companions.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Oak and the Willow.

A Conceited willow had once the vanity to challenge his mighty neighbour the oak, to a trial of strength. It was to be determined by the next storm; and Æolus was addressed by both parties, to exert his most powerful efforts. This was no sooner asked than granted; and a violent hurricane arose: when the pliant willow, bending from the blast, or shrinking under it, evaded all its force: while the generous oak, disdaining to give way, opposed its fury, and was torn up by the roots. Immediately the willow began to exult, and to claim the victory: when thus the fallen oak interrupted his exultation; Callest thou this a trial of strength? Poor wretch! not to thy strength, but weakness; not to thy boldly facing danger, but meanly skulking from it, thou owest thy present safety. I am an oak, though fallen; thou still a willow, though unhurt: but who, except so mean a wretch as thyself, would prefer an ignominious life, preserved by craft or cowardice, to the glory of meeting death in a brave contention?

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Boy and the Filberts.

A Certain boy, as Epictetus tells the fable, put his hand into a pitcher, where great plenty of figs and filberts were deposited; he grasped as many as his fist could possibly hold, but when he endeavoured to pull it out, the narrowness of the neck prevented him. Unwilling to
lose

lose any of them, but unable to draw out his hand, he burst into tears, and bitterly bemoaned his hard fortune. An honest fellow who stood by, gave him this wise and reasonable advice;---Grasp only half the quantity, my boy, and you will easily succeed.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Satyr and the Traveller.

A Poor man travelling in the depth of winter, through a dreary forest, no inn to receive him, no human creature to befriend or comfort him, was in danger of being starved to death. At last, however, he came to the cave of a satyr, where he intreated leave to rest a while, and shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather. The satyr very civilly complied with his request. The man had no sooner entered, than he began to blow his fingers. His host, surprized at the novelty of the action, was curious to know the meaning of it. I do it, said the traveller, to warm my frozen joints, which are benumbed with cold. Presently afterwards the satyr having prepared a mess of hot gruel to refresh his guest, the man found it necessary to blow his porridge too. What, inquired the satyr, is not your gruel hot enough? Yes, replied the traveller, too hot; and I blow it to make it cooler. Do you so? quoth the satyr: then get out of my cave as fast as you can; for I desire to have no communication with a creature, that blows hot and cold with the same breath.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Horse and the Stag.

BEFORE the use of horses was known in the world, one of those noble animals, having been insulted by a stag, and finding himself unequal to his adversary, applied to a man for assistance. The request was easily granted, and the man putting a bridle in his mouth, and mounting upon his back, soon came up with the stag, and laid him dead at his enemy's feet. The horse having thus gratified his revenge, thanked his auxiliary : And now will I return in triumph, said he, and reign the undisputed lord of the forest. By no means, replied the man ; I shall have occasion for your services, and you must go home with me. So saying, he led him to his hovel, where the unhappy steed spent the remainder of his days in a laborious servitude ; sensible too late, “ that how pleasing soever revenge may appear, it always costs more to a generous mind than the purchase is worth.”

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Farmer and his Sons.

A Wealthy old farmer, who had for some time been declining in his health, perceiving that he had not many days to live, called his sons together to his bed-side. My dear children, said the dying man, I leave it with you as my last injunction, not to part with the farm which has been in our family these hundred years : for, to disclose to you a secret which I received from my father, and which I now think proper to communicate to you,

you, there is a treasure hid somewhere in the grounds ; though I never could discover the particular spot where it lies concealed. However, as soon as the harvest is got in, spare no pains in the search, and I am well assured you will not lose your labour. The wise old man was no sooner laid in his grave, and the time he mentioned arrived, than his sons went to work, and with great vigour and alacrity turned up again and again every foot of ground belonging to their farm : the consequence of which was, although they did not find the object of their pursuit, that their lands yielded a far more plentiful crop than those of their neighbours. At the end of the year, when they were settling their accounts, and computing their extraordinary profits, I would venture a wager, said one of the brothers more acute than the rest, that this was the concealed wealth my father meant. I am sure, at least, we have found by experience, that “ Industry is itself a treasure.”

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Lion and the Gnat.

A Vaunt ! thou paltry, contemptible insect ! said a proud lion one day to a gnat that was frisking about in the air near his den. The gnat, enraged at this unprovoked insult, vowed revenge, and immediately settled upon the lion's neck. After having sufficiently teized him in that quarter, she quitted her station and retired under his belly ; and from thence made her last and most formidable attack in his nostrils, where flinging him almost to madness, the lion at length fell down, utterly spent with rage, vexation, and pain. The gnat having thus abundantly gratified her resentment, flew off in great exultation : but in the

heedless transports of her success, not sufficiently attending to her own security, she found herself in her retreat unexpectedly entangled in the web of a spider; who rushing out instantly upon her, put an end at once to her triumph and her life.

This fable instructs us, never to suffer success so far to transport us, as to throw us off our guard against a reverse of fortune.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Miser and his Treasure.

A Miser having scraped together a considerable sum of money, by denying himself the common conveniencies of life, was much embarrassed where to lodge it most securely. After many perplexing debates with himself, he at length fixed upon a corner in a retired field, where he deposited his treasure, and with it his heart, in a hole which he dug for that purpose. His mind was now for a moment at ease; but he had not proceeded many paces in his way home, when all his anxiety returned; and he could not forbear going back to see that every thing was safe. This he repeated again and again; till he was at last observed by a labourer who was amending a hedge in an adjacent meadow. The fellow concluding that something extraordinary must be the occasion of these frequent visits, marked the spot; and coming in the night in order to examine it, he discovered the prize, and bore it off unmolested. Early the next morning, the miser again renewed his visit; when finding his treasure gone, he broke out into the most bitter exclamations. A traveller, who happened to be passing by at the same time, was moved by his complaints to enquire into the occasion of them.

Alas

Alas! replied the miser, I have sustained the most cruel and irreparable loss! some villain has robbed me of a sum of money, which I buired under this stone no longer ago than yesterday. Buried! returned the traveller with surprize; a very extraordinary method truly of disposing of your riches! Why did you not rather keep them in your house, that they might be ready for your daily occasions? Daily occasions! resumed the miser, with an air of much indignation; do you imagine I so little know the value of money, as to suffer it to be run away with by occasions? on the contrary, I had prudently resolved not to touch a single shilling of it. If that was your wise resolution, answered the traveller, I see no sort of reason for your being thus afflicted! it is but putting this stone in the place of your treasure, and it will answer all your purposes full as well.

F A B L E XL.

Minerva's Olive.

THE gods, say the heathen mythologists, have each of them their favourite tree. Jupiter preferred the oak, Venus the myrtle, and Phœbus the laurel; Cybele the pine, and Hercules the poplar. Minerva, continues the mythologist, surprized that they should choose barren trees, asked Jupiter the reason.—It is, said he, to prevent any suspicion that we confer the honour we do them, for the sake of their fruit. Let folly suspect what it pleases, returned Minerva; I shall not scruple to acknowledge, that I make choice of the olive for the usefulness of its fruit. O daughter, replied the father of the gods, it is with justice that men esteem thee wise; for nothing is truly valuable that is not useful.

F A B L E X L I.

The Mimick and the Countryman.

MEN often judge wrong from some foolish prejudice ; and whilst they persist in the defence of their mistakes, are sometimes brought to shame by incontestable evidence.

A certain wealthy patrician, intending to treat the Roman people with some theatrical entertainments, published a reward to any one who could furnish out a new or uncommon diversion. Excited by emulation, the artists assembled from all parts ; among whom, a mimick well known for his arch wit, gave out that he had a kind of entertainment that had never yet been produced upon any stage.

This report being spread about, brought the whole city together. The theatre could hardly contain the number of spectators. And when the artist appeared alone upon the stage, without any apparatus, without any prompter or assistant, curiosity and suspense kept the spectators in a profound silence.

On a sudden the performer thrust down his head into his bosom, and mimicked the squeaking of a young pig so naturally, that the audience insisted upon it, he had a real pig under his cloak, and ordered him to be searched. Which being done, when nothing appeared, they loaded the man with encomiums, and honoured him with the most extravagant applause.

A country fellow observing what past—"Faith says he, I can do this better than he : and immediately gave out that he would perform the same thing much better the next day. Accordingly, greater crouds assemble : prepossessed however in
favour

favour of the first artist, they sit prepared to laugh at the clown, rather than to judge fairly of his performance.

They both came out upon the stage. The mimic grunts away first, is received with vast applause, and the loudest acclamations. Then the countryman pretending that he concealed a little pig under his cloaths, (which in fact he did) plucked the ear of the animal, and by the pain forced him to utter his natural cry. The people exclaimed aloud that the first performer had imitated the pig much more naturally, and would have hissed the countryman off the stage: but producing the real pig from his bosom, and convincing them by a visible proof of their ridiculous error; See, gentlemen, says he, what pretty sort of judges you are!

F A B L E XLII.

The Dog and the Crocodile.

WE can never be too carefully guarded against a connexion with persons of a suspicious character.

As a dog was courting the banks of the Nile, he grew thirsty; but fearing to be seized by the monsters of that river, he would not stop to satiate his drought, but lapped as he ran. A crocodile raising his head above the surface of the water, asked him, Why he was in such a hurry? he had often, he said, wished for his acquaintance, and should be glad to embrace the present opportunity. You do me great honour, said the dog, but it is to avoid such companions as you that I am in so much haste.

F A B L E XLIII.

The Wolf in Disguise.

DEsigning hypocrites frequently lay themselves open to discovery, by over-acting their parts.

A wolf who by his frequent visits to a flock of sheep in his neighbourhood, began to be extremely well known to them, thought it expedient, for the more successfully carrying on his depredations, to appear in a new character. To this end he disguised himself in a shepherd's habit; and resting his fore-feet upon a stick, which served him by way of crook, he softly made his approaches towards the fold. It happened that the shepherd and his dog were both of them extended on the grass, fast asleep; so that he would certainly have succeeded in his project, if he had not imprudently attempted to imitate the shepherd's voice. The horrid noise awakened them both: when the wolf encumbered with his disguise, and finding it impossible either to resist, or to flee, yielded up his life an easy prey to the shepherd's dog.

F A B L E XLIV.

The Bee and the Spider.

THE bee and the spider once entered into a warm debate which was the better artist. The spider urged her skill in the mathematics; and asserted that no one was half so well acquainted as herself with the construction of lines, angles, squares, and circles: that the web she daily wove was a specimen of art inimitable by any other creature in the universe: and besides, that her works were derived from herself alone, the product

duct of her own bowels; whereas the boasted honey of the bee, was stolen from every herb and flower of the field; nay, that she had obligations even to the meanest weeds. To this the bee replied, that she was in hopes the art of extracting honey from the meanest weeds, would at least have been allowed her as an excellence; and that as to her stealing sweets from the herbs and flowers of the field, her skill was there so conspicuous, that no flower ever suffered the least diminution of its fragrance from so delicate an operation. Then, as to the spider's vaunted knowledge in the construction of lines and angles, she believed she might safely rest the merits of her cause, on the regularity alone of her combs; but since she could add to this, the sweetness and excellence of her honey, and the various purposes to which her wax was employed, she had nothing to fear from a comparison of her skill with that of the weaver of a slimy cobweb; for the value of every art, she observed, is chiefly to be estimated by its use.

F A B L E XLV.

The Ass and his Master.

A Diligent ass, that had long served a severe master, daily loaded beyond his strength, and kept but at very short commons, happened one day in his old age to be oppressed with a burthen of earthen-ware. His strength being much impaired, and the road deep and uneven, he unfortunately made a trip, and unable to recover himself, fell down and broke all the vessels to pieces. His master transported with rage, began to beat him with great violence, and without mercy. To whom the poor ass, lifting up his head as he lay on the ground, strongly remonstrated: Unfeeling wretch!

wretch! to thy own avaricious cruelty, in first pinching me of food, and then loading me beyond my strength, thou owest the misfortune which thou so unjustly imputeest to me.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Cock and the Fox.

AN experienced old cock was setting himself to roost upon a high bough, when a fox appeared under the tree. I am come, said the artful hypocrite, to acquaint you in the name of all my brethren, that a general peace is concluded between us and your whole family. Descend immediately I beseech you, that we may mutually embrace upon so joyful and unexpected an event. My good friend, replied the cock, nothing could be more agreeable to me than this news: and to hear it from you increases my satisfaction. But I spy two greyhounds at a distance coming this way, who are probably dispatched as couriers with the treaty: as they run very swiftly, and will certainly be here in a few minutes, I will wait their arrival, that we may all four embrace together. Reynard well knew that if this was the case, it was no time for him to remain there any longer: pretending therefore to be in great haste; Adieu, said he, for the present; we will reserve our rejoicings to another opportunity: upon which he darted into the woods with all imaginable expedition. Old Chanticleer no sooner saw him depart, than he crowed abundantly in the triumph of his artifice: for by a harmless stratagem to disappoint the malevolent intentions of those who are endeavouring to deceive us to our ruin, is not only innocent but laudable.

F A B L E XLVII.

The Eagle and the Crow.

TO mistake our own talents, or over-rate our abilities, is always ridiculous, and sometimes dangerous.

An eagle, from the top of a high mountain, made a stoop at a lamb, pounced it, and bore it away to her young. A crow, who had built her nest in a cedar near the foot of the rock, observing what passed, was ambitious of performing the same exploit: and darting from her nest, fixed her talons in the fleece of another lamb. But neither able to move her prey, nor disentangle her feet, she was taken by the shepherd, and carried away for his children to play with: who eagerly enquiring what bird it was,——An hour ago, said he, she fancied herself an eagle; however, I suppose she is by this time convinced that she is but a crow.

F A B L E XLVIII.

The Farmer and the Stag.

A Stag, who had left at some distance a pack of hounds, came up to a farmer, and desired he would suffer him to hide himself in a little coppice which joined to his house. The farmer, on condition that he would forbear to enter a field of wheat, which lay before him, and was now ready for the sickle, immediately gave him leave, and promised not to betray him. The squire with his train instantly appeared and enquiring whether he had not seen the stag; No, said the farmer, he has not passed this way, I assure you: but,

but, in order to curry favour at the same time with his worship, he pointed sily with his finger to the place where the poor beast lay concealed. This however, the sportsman, intent on his game, did not observe, but passed on with his dogs across the very field. As soon as the stag perceived they were gone, he prepared to steal off, without speaking a word. Methinks, cryed the farmer, you might thank me, at least, for the refuge I have afforded you: Yes, said the stag, and had your hands been as honest as your tongue, I certainly should; but all the return that a double dealer has to expect, is a just indignation and contempt.

F A B L E XLIX.

The Lion, the Tyger, and the Fox.

A Lion and a .tyger jointly seized on a young fawn, which they immediately killed. This they had no sooner performed, than they fell to fighting, in order to decide whose property it should be. The battle was so bloody, and so obstinate, that they were both compelled, thro' weariness and loss of blood, to desist; and lay down by mutual consent, totally disabled. At this instant, a wily fox unluckily came by; who, perceiving their situation, made bold to seize the contested prey, and bore it off unmolested. As soon as the lion could recover breath, How foolish, said he, has been our conduct! Instead of being contented as we ought, with our respective shares; our senseless rage has rendered us unable to prevent this rascally fox from defrauding us of the whole.

F A B L E L.

The Lion and the Ass.

A Conceited ass had once the impertinence to bray forth some contemptuous speeches against the lion. The suddenness of the insult, at first raised some emotions of wrath in his breast: but turning his head and perceiving from whence it came, they immediately subsided, and he very sedately walked on, without deigning to honour the contemptible creature, even so much as with an angry word.

F A B L E LI.

The Snake and the Hedge-hog.

IT is by no means prudent to join interests with such as have it in their power to subject us to their own conditions.

By the intreaties of a hedge-hog half starved with cold, a snake was once persuaded to receive him into her cell. He was no sooner entered, than his prickles began to be very uneasy to his companion: upon which, the snake desired he would provide himself another lodging, as she found her apartment was not large enough to accommodate both. Nay, said the hedge-hog, let them that are uneasy in their situation exchange it; for my own part, I am very well contented where I am; and if you are not, you are welcome to remove whenever you think proper.

F A B L E LII.

The Trumpeter.

A Trumpeter in a certain army, happened to be taken prisoner. He was ordered immediately

ly to execution, but pleaded in excuse for himself, that it was unjust a person should suffer death, who, far from an intention of mischief, did not even wear an offensive weapon. So much the rather, replied one of the enemy, shalt thou die; since without any design of fighting thyself, thou excitest others to the bloody business: for he that is the abettor of a bad action, is at least equally guilty with him that commits it.

F A B L E L I I I.

** Vice and Fortune.*

FORTUNE and Vice, according to Plutarch, had once a violent contest, which of them had it most in their power to make mankind unhappy. Fortune boasted that she could take from men every external good, and bring upon them every external evil. Be it so, replied Vice; but this is by no means sufficient without my assistance: whereas without yours, I am able to render them completely miserable; nay, in spite too of all your endeavours to make them happy.

** This fable is abridged from Plutarch, by Lord Boscawen, in his Philosophical Tracts.*

F A B L E L I V.

The Bear and the Bees.

A Bear happened to be stung by a bee, and the pain was so acute, that in the madness of revenge he ran into the garden, and overturned the hive. This outrage provoked their anger to a high degree, and brought the fury of the whole swarm upon him. They attacked him with such violence, that his life was in danger, and it was
with

with the utmost difficulty that he made his escape, wounded from head to tail. In this desperate condition, lamenting his misfortune, and licking his sores, he could not forbear reflecting, how much more adviseable it had been to have patiently acquiesced under one injury, than thus by an unprofitable resentment to have provoked a thousand.



F A B L E S.

B O O K II.

From the MODERNS.

F A B L E I.

The Miller, his Son, and their Ass.

A Miller and his son were driving their ass to market, in order to sell him. That he might get thither fresh and in good condition, they drove him on gently before them. They had not gone far, when they met a company of travellers. Sure, say they, you are mighty careful of your ass: methinks one of you might as well get up and ride, as let him walk on at his ease, while you trudge after him on foot. In compliance with this advice, the old man set his son upon the beast. They had scarce advanced a quarter of a mile further, when they met another company. You lazy booby, said one of the party, why don't you get down, and let your poor father ride? Upon this, the old man made his son dismount, and got up himself. In this manner they had not marched many furlongs, when a third company began to insult the father. You hard-hearted, unnatural wretch, say they, how can you suffer that poor lad to wade through the dirt, while you like an alderman ride at your ease? The good-natured miller

ler stood corrected, and immediately took his son up behind him. And now, the next man they met exclaimed with more vehemence and indignation than all the rest. Was there ever such a couple of lazy boobies! to over-load in so unconscionable a manner a poor dumb creature, who is far less able to carry them than they are to carry him! The good old man, perplexed with variety of opinions, was half inclined to make the experiment, but was sufficiently convinced by this time, that there cannot be a more fruitless attempt, than to endeavour to please all mankind.

F A B L E II.

The Sorceress.

Night and silence had now given repose to the whole world; when an old ill-natured sorceress, in order to exercise her infernal arts, entered into a gloomy wood, that trembled at her approach. The scene of her horrid incantations was within the circumference of a large circle; in the center of which an altar was raised, where the hallowed vervain blazed in triangular flames, while the mischievous hag pronounced the dreadful words, which bound all hell in obedience to her charms. She blows a raging pestilence from her lips into the neighbouring folds; the innocent cattle die, to afford a fit sacrifice to the infernal deities. The moon, by powerful spells drawn down from her orb, enters the wood: legions of spirits from Pluto's realms appear before the altar, and demand her pleasure. 'Tell me, said she, where I shall find what I have lost, my favourite little dog. **How!**—cried they all, enraged—Impertinent Beldame! must the order of nature be inverted, and the repose of every creature disturbed, for the sake of thy little dog?

FABLE III.

The Camelion.

TWO travellers happened on their journey to be engaged in a warm dispute about the colour of the camelion. One of them affirmed that it was blue ; that he had seen it with his own eyes, upon the naked branch of a tree, feeding on the air, in a very clear day. The other strongly asserted that it was green, and that he had viewed it very closely and minutely on the broad leaf of a fig tree. Both of them were positive, and the dispute was rising to a quarrel ; but a third person luckily coming by, they agreed to refer the question to his decision. Gentlemen, said the arbitrator, with a smile of great self-satisfaction, you could not have been more lucky in your reference, as I happen to have caught one of them last night : but indeed you are both mistaken, for the creature is totally black. Black ! cryed they both ; impossible ! Nay, quoth the umpire, with great assurance, the matter may soon be decided, for I immediately enclosed my camelion in a little paper box, and here he is. So saying, he drew it out of his pocket, opened his box, and behold it was as white as snow. The positive disputants looked equally surpris'd, and equally confounded : while the sagacious reptile assuming the air of a philosopher, thus admonish'd them : Ye children of men, learn diffidence and moderation in your opinions. 'Tis true, you happen, in the present instance, to be all in the right, and have only considered the subject under different circumstances : but pray, for the future, allow other men to have eyesight as well as yourselves ; nor wonder if every one prefers the testimony of his own senses, to that of another's.

FABLE

F A B L E IV.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

A Flock of sheep were feeding in a meadow, while their dogs were asleep, and their shepherd at a distance playing on his pipe beneath the shade of a spreading elm. A young unexperienced lamb, observing a half-starved wolf peeping thro' the pales of the enclosure, entered into conversation with him. Pray what are you seeking for here? said the lamb. I am looking, replied the wolf, for some tender grass; for nothing, you know, is more pleasant than to feed in a fresh pasture, and to slake one's thirst at a crystal stream: both which, I perceive, you enjoy within these pales in their utmost perfection. Happy creature! continued he, how much I envy you your lot! who are in possession of the utmost I desire: for I have long been taught by philosophy, to be satisfied with a little. It seems then, returned the simple lamb, that those who say you feed on flesh, accuse you falsely, since a little will grass easily content you. If this be true, let us for the future live like brethren, and feed together. So saying, the simple lamb imprudently crept through the fence, and became at once a prey to our pretended philosopher, and a sacrifice to her own inexperience and credulity.

F A B L E V.

The Fox and the Bramble.

A Fox closely pursued by a pack of dogs, took shelter under the covert of a bramble. He rejoiced in this asylum, and for a while was very happy: but soon found, that if he attempted to stir,

fir, he was wounded by thorns and prickles on every side. However, making a virtue of necessity, he forbore to complain; and comforted himself with reflecting, that no bliss is perfect; that good and evil are mixt, and flow from the same fountain. These briars indeed, said he, will tear my skin a little, yet they keep off the dogs. For the sake of the good then, let me bear the evil with patience: each bitter has its sweet, and these brambles though they wound my flesh, preserve my life from danger.

F A B L E VI.

The Falcon and the Hen.

Different circumstances and situations make the same actions right or wrong, a virtue or a vice.

Of all the creatures I ever knew, said a falcon to a hen, you are certainly the most ungrateful. What instance of ingratitude, replied the hen, can you justly charge upon me? The greatest, returned the falcon; ingratitude to your highest benefactors, men. Do they not feed you every day, and shelter you every night? Nevertheless, when they endeavour to court you to them, you ungratefully forget all their kindness, and fly from them as from an enemy. Now I, who am wild by nature, and no way obliged to them; yet upon the least of their caresses, suffer myself to be taken, and go, or come at their command. All this is very true, replied the hen, but there may be a sufficient reason both for my fear, and for your familiarity: I believe you never saw a single falcon roasting at the fire; whereas I have seen a hundred hens trussed for the spit.

F A B L E VII.

The Travellers and the Money-bag.

AS two men were travelling on the road, one of them espied a bag of money lying on the ground, and picking it up, I am in luck this morning, said he, I have found a bag of money. Yes, replied the other; though, methinks, you should not say *I*, but *We* have found it; for when two friends are travelling together, they ought equally to share in any accidental good fortune that may happen to attend them. No, replied the former, it was I that found it, and I must insist upon keeping it. He had no sooner spoken the words than they were alarmed with a hue and cry after a thief, who had that morning taken a purse upon the road. Lord, says the finder, this is extremely unfortunate, we shall certainly be seized. Good Sir, replied the other, be pleased not to say *We*, but *I*: as you would not allow me a share in the prize, you have no right to make me a partner in the punishment.

F A B L E VIII.

The discontented Ass.

IN the depth of winter, a poor ass prayed heartily for the spring, that he might exchange a cold lodging, and a heartless truss of straw, for a little warm weather, and a mouthful of fresh grass. In a short time, according to his wish, the warm weather, and the fresh grass came on; but brought with them so much toil and business, that he was soon as weary of the spring as before of the winter; and he now became impatient for the approach of summer. Summer arrives: but the heat, the harvest-work, and other drudgeries and inconveniencies of

of the season, set him as far from happiness as before; which he now flattered himself would be found in the plenty of autumn. But here too he is disappointed; for what with the carrying of apples, roots, fuel for the winter, and other provisions, he was in autumn more fatigued than ever. Having thus trod round the circle of the year, in a course of restless labour, uneasiness and disappointment; and found no season, nor station of life, without its business and its trouble; he was forced at last to acquiesce in the cold comfort of winter, where his complaint began: convinced that in this world there is no true happiness.

FABLE IX.

The two Springs.

TWO springs which issued from the same mountain, began their course together: one of them took her way in a silent and gentle stream, while the other rushed along with a sounding and rapid current. Sister, said the latter, at the rate you move, you will probably be dried up before you advance much farther: whereas, for myself, I will venture a wager, that within two or three hundred furlongs I shall become navigable, and after distributing commerce and wealth wherever I flow, I shall majestically proceed to pay my tribute to the ocean: so farewell, dear sister, and patiently submit to your fate. Her sister made no reply; but calmly descending to the meadows below, increased her stream by the numberless little rills, which she collected in her progress, till at length she was enabled to rise into a considerable river: whilst the proud stream, who had the vanity to depend solely upon her own sufficiency, continued a shallow brook, and was glad at last to be helped

helped forward, by throwing herself into the arms of her despised sister.

F A B L E X.

The Rose and the Butterfly.

A Fine powdered butterfly fell in love with a beautiful rose, who expanded her charms in a neighbouring parterre. Matters were soon adjusted between them, and they mutually vowed eternal fidelity. The butterfly, perfectly satisfied with the success of his amour, took a tender leave of his mistress, and did not return again 'till noon. What! said the rose, when she saw him approaching, is the ardent passion you vowed, so soon extinguished? It is an age since you paid me a visit. But no wonder; for I observed you courting by turns every flower in the garden. You little coquet, replied the butterfly, it well becomes you truly, to reproach me with my gallantries; when in fact I only copy the example which you yourself have set me. For, not to mention the satisfaction with which you admitted the kisses of the fragrant Zephyr; did I not see you displaying your charms to the bee, the fly, the wasp, and in short, encouraging and the receiving addresses of every buzzing insect that fluttered within your view?

If you will be a coquet, you must expect to find me inconstant.

F A B L E XI.

The Tortoise and the two Ducks.

VAnity and idle curiosity are qualities which generally prove destructive to those who suffer themselves to be governed by them.

A tor-

A tortoise, weary of passing her days in the same obscure corner, conceived a wonderful inclination to visit foreign countries. Two ducks, whom the simple tortoise acquainted with her intention, undertook to oblige her upon the occasion. Accordingly they told her, that if she would fasten her mouth to the middle of a pole, they would take the two ends, and transport her wherever she chose to be conveyed. The tortoise approved of the expedient; and every thing being prepared, the ducks began their flight with her. They had not travelled far in the air, when they were met by a crow, who enquiring what they were bearing along, they replied, The queen of the tortoises. The tortoise, vain of the new and unmerited appellation, was going to confirm the title, when opening her mouth for that purpose, she let go her hold, and was dashed to pieces by her fall.

FABLE XII.

The Cat and the old Rat.

A Certain cat had made such unmerciful havoc among the vermin of his neighbourhood, that not a single rat or mouse dared venture to appear abroad. Puss was soon convinced, that if affairs remained in their present situation, he must be totally unsupplied with provision. After mature deliberation therefore, he resolved to have recourse to stratagem. For this purpose, he suspended himself from a shelf with his head downwards, pretending to be dead. The rats and mice observing him, as they peeped from their holes, in this dangling attitude, concluded he was hanged for some misdemeanour; and with great joy immediately sallied forth in quest of their prey. Puss, as soon as a sufficient number were collected

D

together,

together, quitting her hold, dropped into the midst of them ; and very few had the fortune to make good their retreat. This artifice having succeeded so well, he was encouraged to try the event of a second. Accordingly, he whitened his coat all over, by rolling himself in a heap of flour, and in this disguise lay concealed in the bottom of a meal tub. This stratagem was executed in general with the same effect as the former. But an old experienced rat, altogether as cunning as her adversary, was not so easily ensnared. I don't much like, said she, that white heap yonder ; something whispers me, there is mischief concealed under it.' 'Tis true, it may be meal ; but it may likewise be something that I shall not relish quite so well. There can be no harm, at least, in keeping at a proper distance : for caution, I am sure, is the parent of security.

F A B L E XIII.

The Country Maid and her Milk-pail.

WHEN men suffer their imagination to amuse them with the prospect of distant and uncertain improvements of their condition and circumstances ; they frequently sustain real losses, by their inattention to those affairs in which they are immediately concerned.

A country maid was walking very deliberately with a pail of milk upon her head, when she fell into the following train of reflections. The money for which I shall sell this milk, will enable me to increase my stock of eggs to three hundred. These eggs, allowing for what may prove addled, and what may be destroyed by vermin, will produce at least two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market about Christmas, when poultry always bears a good price

price: so that by May-day, I cannot fail of having money enough to purchase a new gown. Green—let me consider—yes, green becomes my complexion best, and green it shall be. In this dress I will go to the fair, where all the young fellows will strive to have me for a partner: but I shall perhaps refuse every one of them, and with an air of disdain toss from them—Transported with this triumphant thought, she could not forbear acting with her head what thus passed in her imagination, when down came the pail of milk, and all her imaginary happiness vanished like a dream.

FABLE XIV.

The Cormorant and the Fishes.

IT is very imprudent to trust an enemy, or even a stranger, so far as to put one's self in his power.

A cormorant whose eyes were become so dim by age, that he could not discern his prey at the bottom of the waters, bethought himself of a stratagem to supply his wants. Hark you, friend, said he, to a gudgeon whom he observed swimming near the surface of a certain canal, if you have any regard for yourself or your brethren, go this moment and acquaint them from me, that the owner of this piece of water is determined to drag it a week hence. The gudgeon immediately swam away, and made his report of this terrible news to a general assembly of the fish: who unanimously agreed to send him back as their ambassador to the cormorant. The purport of his commission was to return him their thanks for the intelligence; and to add their intreaties, that, as he had been so good as to inform them of their danger, he would

be graciously pleased to put them into a method of escaping it. That I will most readily, returned the artful cormorant, and assist you with my best services into the bargain. You have only to collect yourselves together at the top of the water, and I will undertake to transport you safely one by one to my own residence, by the side of a solitary pool, to which no creature but myself ever found the way. The project was perfectly well approved by the unwary fish, and with great expedition executed by the deceitful cormorant ; who having placed them in a shallow water, the bottom of which his eye could easily discern, they were all devoured by him in their turns, as his hunger or his luxury required.

FABLE XV.

The Atheist and the Acorn.

IT was the fool who said in his heart, *There is no God*: into the breast of a wise man, such a thought could never have entered. One of those refined reasoners commonly called minute philosophers, was sitting at his ease beneath the shade of a large oak, while at his side the weak branches of a pumpkin were trailed upon the ground. This put our great logician into his old train of reasoning against providence. Is it consistent with common sense, said he, that infinite wisdom should create so large and stately a tree, with branches of such prodigious strength, to bear so small and insignificant a fruit as an acorn ? Or that so weak a stem as that of a pumpkin, should be loaded with so disproportioned a weight ? A child may see the absurdity of it. In the midst of this curious speculation, down dropt an acorn, from one of the highest branches of the oak, full upon his head. How small a trifle may overturn the systems of fallible men ! Struck with

with the accident, he could not help crying out, How providential it is that this was not a pumpkin!

FABLE XVI.

The Lynx and the Mole.

UNDER the covert of a thick wood, at the foot of a tree, as a lynx lay whetting his teeth, and waiting for his prey; he espied a mole, concealed under a hillock of her own raising. Alas, poor creature, said the lynx, how much I pity thee! Surely Jupiter has been very unkind, to debar thee from the light of the day, which rejoices the whole creation. Thou art certainly not above half alive; and it would be doing thee a service, to put an end to so unanimated a being. I thank you for your kindness, replied the mole, but I think I have full as much vivacity as my state and circumstances require. For the rest, I am perfectly well contented with the faculties which Jupiter has allotted me, who I am sure wants not our direction in distributing his gifts with propriety. I have not, 'tis true, your piercing eyes; but I have ears which answer all my purposes full as well. Hark! for example, I am warned, by a noise which I hear behind you, to fly from danger. So saying, he sunk into the earth, while a javelin from the arm of a hunter, pierced this quick-sighted lynx to the heart.

FABLE XVII.

The Spider and the Silkworm.

THOSE arts are most valuable, which are of greatest use.

A spider busied in spreading his web from one side of the room to the other, was asked by an industrious silkworm, to what end he spent so much time and labour, in making such a number of lines and circles? The spider angrily replied, Do not disturb me, thou ignorant thing: I transmit my ingenuity to posterity, and fame is the object of my wishes. Just as he had spoken, Susan the chambermaid, coming into the room to feed her silkworms, saw the spider at his work; and with one stroke of her broom, sweeps him away, and destroys at once his labours, and his hopes of fame.

F A B L E XVIII.

The Bee and the Fly.

A Bee observing a fly frisking about her hive, asked him in a very passionate tone, what he did there? Is it for such scoundrels as you, said she, to intrude into the company of the queens of the air? You have great reason truly, replied the fly, to be out of humour: I am sure they must be mad, who would have any concern with so quarrelsome a nation. And why so? thou saucy malapert, returned the enraged bee; we have the best laws, and are governed by the best policy in the world. We feed upon the most fragrant flowers, and all our business is to make honey: honey, which equals nectar, thou unsavory wretch, who livest upon nothing but putrefaction and excrement. We live as we can, rejoined the fly: poverty, I hope, is no crime; but passion is, I am sure. The honey you make, is sweet I grant you; but your heart is all bitterness: for to be revenged on an enemy, you'll destroy your own life; and are so inconsiderate in your rage, as to do more mischief to yourself than to your adversary.

Take

Take my word for it; one, had better have less considerable talents, and use them with more discretion.

FABLE XIX.

Genius, Virtue, and Reputation.

GENIUS, Virtue, and Reputation, three great friends, agreed to travel over the island of Great Britain, to see whatever might be worthy of observation. But as some misfortune, said they, may happen to separate us; let us consider before we set out, by what means we may find each other again. Should it be my ill fate, said Genius, to be severed from my friends, which heaven forbid! you may find me kneeling in devotion before the tomb of Shakespear; or rapt in some grove where Milton talked with angels; or musing in the grotto where Pope caught inspiration. Virtue, with a sigh, acknowledged, that her friends were not very numerous: but were I to lose you, she cried, with whom I am at present so happily united; I should chuse to take sanctuary in the temples of religion, in the palaces of royalty, or in the stately domes of ministers of state: but as it may be my ill fortune to be there denied admittance, enquire for some cottage where Contentment has a bower, and there you will certainly find me. Ah, my dear friends, said Reputation very earnestly, you, I perceive, when missing, may possibly be recovered; but take care, I intreat you, always to keep sight of me, for if I am once lost, I am never to be retrieved.

FABLE XX.

The Court of Death.

DEATH, the king of terrors, on the anniversary of his coronation, was determined to chuse

chuse his prime minister. His pale courtiers, the ghastly train of diseases, were all summoned to attend, and each preferred his claim to the honour of this illustrious office. Fever urged the numbers he destroyed; cold Palsy set forth his pretensions, by shaking all his limbs; and Dropsy, by his swelled unwieldy carcase. Gout hobbled up, and alleged his great power in racking every joint; and Asthma's inability to speak, was a strong, tho' silent argument in favour of his claim. Stone and Cholic pleaded their violence; Plague, his rapid progress in destruction: and Consumption, tho' slow, insisted that he was sure. In the midst of this contention, the court was disturbed with the noise of music, dancing, feasting, and revelry; when immediately entered a lady, with a bold lascivious air, and a flushed and jovial countenance: she was attended on one hand by a troop of cooks and bacchanals; and on the other, by a train of wanton youths and damsels, who danced half naked to the softest musical instruments: her name was **INTEMPERANCE**. She waved her hand, and thus addressed the crowd of diseases. Give way, ye sickly band of pretenders, nor dare to vie with my superior merits in the service of this great monarch. Am not I your parent? the author of your beings? Do ye not derive your power of shortning human life, almost wholly from me? Who then so fit as I myself, for this important office? The grisly monarch grinned a smile of approbation, placed her at his right hand, and she immediately became his *prime* favourite, and *principal* minister.

FABLE XXI.

Industry and Sloth.

HOW many live in the world as useless, as if they had never been born ! They pass through life, like a bird through the air, and leave no track behind them : waste the prime of their days in deliberating what they shall do ; and bring them to a period, without coming to any determination.

An indolent young man, being asked why he lay in bed so long, jocosely and carelessly answered—Every morning of my life I am hearing long causes. I have two fine girls, their names are Industry and Sloth, close at my bed side, as soon as ever I awake, pressing their different suits. One intreats me to get up, the other persuades me to lie still : and then they alternately give me various reasons, why I should rise, and why I should not. In the mean time, as it is the duty of an impartial judge to hear all that can be said on either side ; before the pleadings are over, it is time to go to dinner.

FABLE XXII.

The Hare's Ears.

AN elk having accidentally gored a lion, the monarch was so exasperated, that he sent forth an edict, commanding all horned beasts, on pain of death, to depart his dominions. A hare observing the shadow of her ears, was much alarmed at their long and lofty appearance ; and running to one of her friends, acquainted him, that she was resolved to quit the country. For should I happen, said she, however undesignedly, to give offence to my superiors, my ears may be construed

to come within the horn-a&t. Her friend smiled at her apprehensions : and asked, how it was possible that ears could be mistaken for horns ? Had I no more ears than an ostrich, replied the hare, I would not trust them in the hands of an informer : for truth and innocence are arguments of little force, against the logic of power and malice in conjunction.

FABLE XXIII.

The Hermit and the Bear.

AN imprudent friend often does as much mischief by his too great zeal, as the worst enemy could effect by his malice.

A certain hermit having done a good office to a bear, the grateful creature was so sensible of his obligation, that he begged to be admitted as the guardian and companion of his solitude. The hermit willingly accepted his offer ; and conducting him to his cell, they passed their time together in an amicable manner. One very hot day, the hermit having laid him down to sleep, the officious bear employed himself in driving away the flies from his friend's face. But in spite of all his care, one of the flies perpetually returned to the attack, and at last settled upon the hermit's nose. Now I shall have you, most certainly, said the bear ; and with the best intentions imaginable, gave him a violent blow on the face ; which very effectually indeed demolished the fly, but at the same time mangled in a most shocking manner his benefactor's face.

FABLE XXIV.

The Passenger and the Pilot.

IT had blown a violent storm at sea, and the whole crew of a vessel were in imminent danger

ger of shipwreck. After the rolling of the waves was somewhat abated, a certain passenger who had never been at sea before, observing the pilot to have appeared wholly unconcerned even in their greatest danger, had the curiosity to ask him what death his father dyed. What death? said the pilot; why he perished at sea, as my grandfather did before him. And are not you afraid of trusting yourself to an element that has proved thus fatal to your family? Afraid! by no means; why, we must all dye! is not your father dead? Yes, but he dyed in his bed. And why then are not you afraid of trusting yourself to your bed? Because I am there perfectly secure. It may be so, replied the pilot; but if the hand of providence is equally extended over all places, there is no more reason for me to be afraid of going to sea, than for you to be afraid of going to bed.

F A B L E XXV.

The partial Judge.

A Farmer came to a neighbouring lawyer, expressing great concern for an accident which he said had just happened. One of your oxen, continued he, has been gored by an unlucky bull of mine, and I should be glad to know how I am to make you reparation. Thou art a very honest fellow, replied the lawyer, and wilt not think it unreasonable that I expect one of thy oxen, in return. It is no more than justice, quoth the farmer, to be sure; but what did I say?—I mistake—It is your bull that has killed one of my oxen. Indeed! says the lawyer, that alters the case: I must enquire into the affair, and if—And *if*! said the farmer—the business I find would have been concluded without an *if*, had you been as ready to do justice to others, as to exact it from them.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Fox that had lost his Tail.

A Fox having been unwarily caught in a trap, at length with much struggling and difficulty, disengaged himself; not however without being obliged to leave his tail behind him. The joy he felt at his escape, was somewhat abated when he began to consider the price he had paid for it: and he was a good deal mortified by reflecting on the ridiculous figure he should make among his brethren, without a tail. In the agitation of his thoughts upon this occasion, an expedient occurred to him which he resolved to try, in order to remove this disgraceful singularity. With this view he assembled his tribe together, and set forth in a most elaborate speech, how much he had at heart whatever tended to the public weal: he had often thought, he said, on the length and busyness of their tails; was verily persuaded that it was much more burthensome than ornamental, and rendered them besides an easier prey to their enemies. He earnestly recommended it to them therefore, to discharge themselves of so useless and dangerous an incumbrance. My good friend, replied an old fox, who had listened very attentively to his harangue, we are much obliged to you, no doubt, for the concern you express upon our account: but pray turn about before the company, for I cannot for my life help suspecting, that you would not be quite so solicitous to ease us of our tails, if you had not unluckily lost your own.

FABLE XXVII.

The Nobleman and his Son.

A Certain nobleman, much infected by superstition, dreamed one night that his only son a youth about fifteen years of age, was thrown from his horse as he was hunting, and killed upon the spot. This idle dream made so strong an impression upon the weak and credulous father, that he formed a resolution never more to suffer his son to partake of this his favourite amusement. The next morning that the hounds went out, the young man requested permission to follow them; but instead of receiving it, as usual, his father acquainted him with his dream, and peremptorily enjoined him to forbear the sport. The youth, greatly mortified at this unexpected refusal, left the room much disconcerted, and it was with some difficulty that he restrained his passion from indecently breaking out in his father's presence. But upon his return to his own apartment, passing thro' a gallery of pictures, in which was a piece representing a company of gypsies telling a country girl her fortune.—'Tis owing, said he, to a ridiculous superstition of the same kind with that of this simple wench, that I am debarred from one of the principal pleasures of my life: at the same time, with great emotion striking his hand against the canvas, a rusty old nail behind the picture, run far into his wrist. The pain and anguish of the wound threw the youth into a violent fever, which proved too powerful for the skill of the physicians, and in a few days put an end to his life: illustrating an observation, that an over cautious attention to avoid evils, often brings them upon us; and that we frequently run headlong into misfortunes by the very means we pursue to avoid them.

F A B L E XXVIII.

Jupiter and the Herdsman.

A Herdsman missed a young heifer out of his grounds, and, after having diligently sought for it in vain, when he could by no other means gain intelligence of it, betook himself at last to his prayers. Great Jupiter, said he, shew me but the villain who has done me this injury, and I will give thee in sacrifice the finest kid from my flock. He had no sooner uttered his petition, than turning the corner of a wood, he was struck with the sight of a monstrous lion, preying on the carcase of his heifer. Trembling and pale, O Jupiter, cried he, I offered thee a kid if thou would'st grant my petition: I now offer thee a bull, if thou wilt deliver me from the consequence of it.

F A B L E XXIX.

The Eagle and the Owl.

A N eagle and an owl having entered into a league of mutual amity, one of the articles of their treaty was, that the former should not prey upon the younglings of the latter. But tell me, said the owl, should you know my little ones if you were to see them? Indeed I should not, replied the eagle; but if you describe them to me, it will be sufficient. You are to observe then, returned the owl, in the first place, that the charming creatures are perfectly well shaped; in the next, that there is a remarkable sweetness and vivacity in their countenances; and then there is something in their voices so peculiarly melodious—'Tis enough, interrupted the eagle; by these

these marks I cannot fail of distinguishing them : and you may depend upon their never receiving any injury from me. It happened not long afterwards, as the eagle was upon the wing in quest of his prey, that he discovered amidst the ruins of an old castle, a nest of grim-faced, ugly birds, with gloomy countenances, and a voice like that of the furies. These undoubtedly, said he, cannot be the offspring of my friend, and so I shall venture to make free with them. He had scarce finished his repast and departed, when the owl returned ; who finding nothing of her brood remaining but the mangled carcases, broke out into the most bitter exclamations against the cruel and perfidious author of her calamity. A neighbouring bat, who overheard her lamentations, and had been witness to what had passed between her and the eagle ; very gravely told her, that she had no body to blame for this misfortune but herself ; whose blind prejudices in favour of her children, had prompted her to give such a description of them, as did not resemble them in any one single feature or quality.

Parents should very carefully guard against that weak partiality towards their children, which renders them blind to their failings and imperfections : as no disposition is more likely to prove prejudicial to their future welfare.

FABLE XXX.

The Plague among the Beasts.

A Mortal distemper once raged among the beasts, and swept away prodigious numbers. After it had continued some time without abatement, it was concluded in an assembly of the brute creation to be a judgment inflicted upon them for their sins, and a day was appointed for

for a general confession; when it was agreed, that he who appeared to be the greatest sinner, should suffer death as an atonement for the rest. The fox was appointed father confessor upon the occasion; and the lion with great generosity condescended to be the first in making public confession. For my part, said he, I must own I have been an enormous offender; I have killed a few innocent sheep in my time; nay once, but it was a case of necessity, I made a meal of the shepherd. The fox, with much gravity, acknowledged that these in any other than the king would have been inexpressible crimes; but that his majesty had certainly a right to a few silly sheep, nay and to the shepherd too, in a case of necessity. The judgment of the fox was applauded by all the superior savages; and the tyger, the leopard, the bear, and the wolf, made confession of many enormities of the like sanguinary nature: which were all palliated or excused with the same lenity and mercy; and their crimes accounted so venial as scarce to deserve the name of offences. At last, a poor penitent ass, with great contrition acknowledged, that once going thro' the parson's meadow, being very hungry, and tempted by the sweetness of the grass, he had cropt a little of it, not more however in quantity than the tip of his tongue: he was very sorry for the misdemeanour, and hoped——Hope, exclaimed the fox with singular zeal, what canst thou hope for, after the commission of so heinous a crime? What! eat the parson's grass! O sacrilege! This, this is the flagrant wickedness, my brethren, which has drawn the wrath of heaven upon our heads, and this the notorious offender, whose death must make a propitiation for all our transgressions. So saying, he ordered his entrails for sacrifice, and the rest of the beasts went to dinner upon his carcase.

FABLE XXXI.

The Cat, the Cock, and the young Mouse.

A Young mouse, who had seen very little of the world, came running one day to his mother in great haste—O mother, said he, I am frightened almost to death! I have seen the most extraordinary creature that ever was. He has a fierce angry look, and struts about upon two legs. A strange piece of flesh grows on his head, and another under his throat, as red as blood. He flapped his arms against his sides, as if he intended to rise into the air; and stretching out his head, he opened a sharp-pointed mouth so wide, that I thought he was preparing to swallow me up: then he roared at me so horribly, that I trembled every joint, and was glad to run home as fast as I could. If I had not been frightened away by this terrible monster, I was just going to scrape acquaintance with the prettiest creature you ever saw. She had a soft furr skin, thicker than ours, and all beautifully waved with black and grey; with a modest look, and a demeanour so humble and courteous, that methought I could have fallen in love with her. Then she had a fine long tail, which she waved about so prettily, and looked so earnestly at me, that I do believe she was just going to speak to me, when the horrid monster frightened me away. Ah, my dear child, said the mother; you have indeed escaped being devoured, but not by that monster you was so much afraid of: which in truth was only a bird, and would have done you no manner of harm. Whereas the sweet Creature of whom you seem so fond, was no other than a cat; who, under that hypocritical countenance conceals the most

most inveterate hatred to all our race, and subsists entirely by devouring mice. Learn from this incident, my dear, never whilst you live to rely on outward appearances.

F A B L E XXXII.

The Farmer and his Dog.

A Farmer who had just stepped into his field to mend a gap in one of his fences, found at his return, the cradle where he had left his only child asleep, turned upside down, the cloaths all torn and bloody, and his dog lying near it besmeared also with blood. Immediately conceiving that the creature had destroyed his child, he instantly dashed out his brains with the hatchet in his hand: when turning up the cradle, he found his child unhurt, and an enormous serpent lying dead on the floor, killed by that faithful dog, whose courage and fidelity in preserving the life of his son, deserved another kind of reward; these affecting circumstances afforded him a striking lesson, how dangerous it is too hastily to give way to the blind impulse of a sudden passion.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Gnat and the Bee.

A Gnat half starved with cold and pinched with hunger, came early one morning to a bee-hive, begged the relief of charity, and offered to teach music in the family, on the humble terms of diet and lodging. The bee received her petitioner with a cold civility, and desired to be excused. I bring up all my children, said she, to my own useful trade, that they may be able when they grow up, to get an honest livelihood by their industry.

industry. Besides, how do you think I could be so imprudent as to teach them an art, which I see has reduced its professor to indigence and beggary?

FABLE XXXIV.

The Owl and the Eagle.

AN owl sat blinking in the trunk of a hollow tree, and arraigned the brightness of the sun. What is the use of its beams, said she, but to dazzle one's eyes so that one cannot see a mouse. For my part, I am at a loss to conceive for what purpose so glaring an object was created. We had certainly been much better without it. O fool! replied an eagle who was perched on a branch of the same tree, to rail at excellence which thou canst not taste; and not to perceive that the fault is not in the sun, but in thyself. All, 'tis true, have not faculties to understand, or powers to enjoy the benefit of it: but must the business and the pleasures of the world be obstructed, that an owl may catch mice?

FABLE XXXV.

The sick Lion, the Fox, and the Wolf.

ALion, having surfeited himself with feasting too luxuriously on the carcase of a wild boar, was seized with a violent and dangerous disorder. The beasts of the forest flocked in great numbers to pay their respects to him upon the occasion, and scarce one was absent except the fox. The wolf, an ill-natured and malicious beast, seized this opportunity to accuse the fox of pride, ingratitude and disaffection to his majesty. In the midst of his invective, the fox entered; who having heard part of

of the wolf's accusation, and observing the lion's countenance to be kindling into wrath, thus adroitly excused himself, and retorted upon his accuser. With a tone of zealous loyalty he addressed the assembly thus: May the king live for ever! then turning to the lion—I see many here, who with mere lip service have pretended to shew you their loyalty: but for my part, from the moment I heard of your majesty's illness, neglecting useless compliments, I employed myself day and night to enquire among the most learned physicians, an infallible remedy for your disease, and have at length happily been informed of one. It is a plaister made from part of the skin of a wolf, taken warm from his back, and laid to your majesty's stomach. This remedy was no sooner proposed, than it was determined that the experiment should be tryed: and whilst the operation was performing; the fox, with a sarcastic smile, whispered this useful maxim In the wolf's ear——If you would be safe from harm yourself learn for the future not to meditate mischief against others.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Blind Man and the Lame.

TIS from our wants and infirmities that almost all the connections of society take their rise.

A blind man being stopped in a bad piece of road, meets with a lame man, and intreats him to guide him through the difficulty he was got into. How can I do that, replied the lame man, since I am scarce able to drag myself along? but as you appear to be very strong, if you will carry me, we will seek our fortunes together. It will then be my interest to warn you of any thing that may obstruct

direct your way : your feet shall be my feet, and my eyes yours. With all my heart, returned the blind man ; let us render each other our mutual services. So taking his lame companion on his back, they by means of their union travelled on with safety and pleasure.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Lion, the Bear, and the Fox.

THE tyrant of the forest issued a proclamation, commanding all his subjects to repair immediately to his royal den. Among the rest, the bear made his appearance : but pretending to be offended with the steams which issued from the monarch's apartments, he was imprudent enough to hold his nose in his majesty's presence. This insolence was so highly resented, that the lion in a rage laid him dead at his feet. The monkey observing what had passed ; trembled for his carcase ; and attempted to conciliate favour by the most abject flattery. He began with protesting, that for his part, he thought the apartments were perfumed with Arabian spices ; and exclaiming against the rudeness of the bear, admired the beauty of his majesty's paws, so happily formed, he said, to correct the insolence of clowns. This fulsome adulation, instead of being received as he expected, proved no less offensive than the rudeness of the bear : and the courtly monkey was in like manner extended by the side of Sir Bruin. And now his majesty cast his eye upon the fox. Well, Reynard, said he, and what scent do you discover here ? Great prince, replied the cautious fox, my nose was never esteemed my most distinguishing sense : and at present I would by no means venture to give my

my opinion, as I have unfortunately got a terrible cold.

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Owl and the Nightingale.

A Formal solemn owl had many years made his habitation in a grove amongst the ruins of an old monastery, and had pored so often on some mouldy manuscripts, the stupid relicks of a monkish library, that he grew infected with the pride and pedantry of the place ; and mistaking gravity for wisdom, would sit whole days with his eyes half shut, fancying himself profoundly learned. It happened as he sat one evening, half buried in meditation, and half in sleep, that a nightingale, unluckily perching near him, began her melodious lays. He started from his *reverie*, and with a horrid screech interrupting her song—Be gone, cried he, thou impertinent minstrel, nor distract with noisy dissonance my sublime contemplations ; and know, vain songster, that harmony consists in truth alone, which is gained by laborious study ; and not in languishing notes, fit only to sooth the ear of a love-sick maid. Conceited pedant, returned the nightingale, whose wisdom lies only in the feathers that muffle up thy unmeaning face ; music is a natural and rational entertainment, and though not adapted to the ears of an owl, has ever been relished and admired by the best formed minds.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Ant and the Caterpillar.

AS a caterpillar was creeping very slowly along one of the allies of a beautiful garden, he
was

was met by a pert lively ant, who tossing up her head with a scornful air, cried, Prithee get out of the way, thou poor creeping animal, and do not presume to obstruct the paths of thy superiors, by crawling along the road, and besmearing the walks appropriated to their footsteps. Poor creature ! thou lookest like a thing half made, which nature not liking threw by unfinished. I could almost pity thee, methinks ; but it is beneath one of my quality to talk to such little mean creatures as thee : and so, poor creeping wretch, adieu.

The humble caterpillar struck dumb with this disdainful language, retired, went to work, wound himself up in a silken cell, and at the appointed time came out a beautiful butterfly. Just as he was issuing forth, he observed the scornful ant passing by. Stop a moment, madam, said he, and listen to what I shall say. Let me advise you never to despise any one for his condition, as there are none so mean but they may one day change their fortune. You behold me now exalted in the air, whereas you must creep as long as you live.

FABLE XL.

The two Foxes.

TWO foxes formed a stratagem to enter a hen roost ; which having successfully executed, and killed the cock, the hens and the chickens, they began to feed upon them with singular satisfaction. One of the foxes, who was young and inconsiderate, was for devouring them all upon the spot : the other, who was old and covetous, proposed the reserving some of them for another time. “ For experience, child, said he, has made me
“ wise, and I have seen many unexpected events
“ since I came into the world. Let us provide,
“ therefore,

“ therefore, against what may happen, and not
 “ consume all our store at one meal.” “ All this
 “ is wonderful wise, replied the young fox ; but
 “ for my part, I am resolved not to stir till I have
 “ eaten as much as will serve me a whole week :
 “ for who would be mad enough to return hither ?
 “ when it is certain the owner of these fowls will
 “ watch for us, and if he should catch us, would
 “ infallibly put us to death.” After this short dis-
 course, each pursued his own fancy : The young
 fox eat till he burst himself, and had scarcely
 strength to reach his hole before he dyed. The
 old one, who thought it much better to deny his
 appetite for the present, and lay up provision for
 the future, returned the next day, and was killed
 by the farmer. Thus every age has its peculiar
 vice : the young suffer by their insatiable thirst
 after pleasure ; and the old by their incorrigible
 and inordinate avarice.

F A B L E XLI.

The conceited Owl.

A Young owl having accidentally seen himself
 in a crystal fountain, conceived the highest
 opinion of his personal perfections. 'Tis time,
 said he, that Hymen should give me children
 as beautiful as myself, to be the glory of the
 night, and the ornament of our groves. What
 pity would it be, if the race of the most accom-
 plished of birds should be extinct for my want of
 a mate ! Happy the female who is destined
 to spend her life with me ! Full of these self-
 approving thoughts, he intreated the crow to
 propose a match between him and the royal
 daughter of the eagle. Do you imagine, said
 the crow, that the noble eagle, whose pride

it

it is to gaze on the brightest of the heavenly luminaries, will consent to marry his daughter to you, who cannot so much as open your eyes whilst it is day-light? But the self-conceited owl was deaf to all that his Friend could urge; who after much persuasion, was at length prevailed upon to undertake the commission. His proposal was received in the manner that might be expected: the king of birds laughed him to scorn. However, being a monarch of some humour, he ordered him to acquaint the owl, that if he would meet him the next morning at sun-rise in the middle of the sky, he would consent to give him his daughter in marriage. The presumptuous owl undertook to perform the condition; but being dazzled with the sun, and his head growing giddy, he fell from his height upon a rock; from whence being pursued by a flight of birds, he was glad at last to make his escape into the hollow of an old oak; where he passed the remainder of his Days in that obscurity for which Nature designed him.

F A B L E XLII.

The Fox and the Cat.

NOTHING is more common than for men to condemn the very same actions in others, which they practise themselves whenever occasion offers.

A fox and a cat having made a party to travel together, beguiled the tediousness of their journey by a variety of philosophical conversations. Of all the moral virtues, exclaimed Reynard, mercy is sure the noblest! What say you, my sage friend, is it not so? Undoubtedly, replied the cat, with a most demure countenance;

nothing is more becoming, in a creature of any sensibility, than a compassionate disposition. While they were thus philosophizing, and mutually complimenting each other on the wisdom of their respective reflections; a wolf darted out from a wood upon a flock of sheep which were feeding in an adjacent meadow, and without being in the least affected by the moving lamentations of a poor lamb, devoured it before their eyes. Horrible cruelty! exclaimed the cat; why does he not feed on vermin, instead of making his barbarous meals on such innocent creatures? Reynard agreed with his friend in the observation: to which he added several very pathetick remarks on the odiousness of a sanguinary temper. Their indignation was rising in its warmth and zeal, when they arrived at a little cottage by the way side; where the tender-hearted Reynard immediately cast his eye upon a fine cock that was strutting about in the yard. And now adieu moralizing: he leaped over the pales, and without any sort of scruple demolished his prize in an instant. In the mean while, a plump rat which ran out of the stable, totally put to flight our cat's philosophy, who fell to the repast without the least commiseration.

F A B L E XLIII.

The two Horses.

TWO horses were travelling the road together; one loaded with a sack of flour, the other with a sum of money. The latter proud of his splendid burthen, tossed his head with an air of conscious superiority, and every now and then cast a look of contempt upon his humble companion. In passing through a wood,

wood, they were met by a gang of highway-men, who immediately seized upon the horse that was carrying the treasure : but the spirited steed, not being altogether disposed to stand so quietly as was necessary for their purpose, they beat him most unmercifully, and after plundering him of his boasted load, left him to lament at his leisure the cruel wounds he had received. Friend, said his despised companion to him, who had now reason to triumph in his turn, distinguished posts are often dangerous to those who possess them : if you had served a miller as I do, you might have travelled the road unmolested.

F A B L E XLIV.

The Dove and the Ant.

WE should always be ready to do good offices, even to the meanest of our fellow creatures ; as there is no one to whose assistance we may not, upon some occasion or other, be greatly indebted.

A dove was sipping from the banks of a rivulet, when an ant, who was at the same time trailing a grain of corn along the edge of the brook, inadvertently fell in. The dove observing the helpless insect struggling in vain to reach the shore, was touched with compassion ; and plucking a blade of grass, dropped it into the stream ; by means of which the poor ant like a ship-wrecked sailor upon a plank got safe to land. She had scarcely arrived there, when she perceived a fowler just going to discharge his piece at her deliverer : upon which she instantly crept up his foot and stung him on the ankle. The sportsman starting, occasioned a rustling among the boughs, which alarmed the dove, who

immediately sprung up, and by that means escaped the danger with which she was threatened.

F A B L E XLV.

The Parrot.

A Certain widower, in order to amuse his solitary hours, and in some measure supply the conversation of his departed help-mate of loquacious memory, determined to purchase a parrot. With this view he applied to a dealer in birds, who shewed him a large collection of parrots of various kinds. Whilst they were exercising their talkative talents before him, one repeating the cries of the town, another asking for a cup of sack, and a third bawling out for a coach, he observed a green parrot, perched in a thoughtful manner at a distance upon the foot of a table : And so you, my grave gentleman, said he, are quite silent. To which the parrot replied, like a philosophical bird, “ I think the more.” Pleased with this sensible answer, our widower immediately paid down his price, and took home the bird ; conceiving great things from a creature, who had given so striking a specimen of his parts. But after having instructed him during a whole month, he found to his great disappointment, that he could get nothing more from him than the fatiguing repetition of the same dull sentence, “ I think the more.” I find, said he, in great wrath, that thou art a most invincible fool : and ten times more a fool was I, for having formed a favourable opinion of thy abilities upon no better a foundation than an affected solemnity,

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FABLE XLVI.

The Cat and the Bat.

A Cat having devoured a favourite bullfinch of her master, over-heard him threatening to put her to death the moment he could find her. In this distress she preferred a prayer to Jupiter ; vowing, if he would deliver her from her present danger, that never while she lived would she eat another bird. Not long afterwards a bat most invitingly flew into the room where puss was purring in the window. The question was, how to act upon so tempting an occasion ? Her appetite pressed hard on one side ; and her vow threw some scruples in her way on the other. At length she hit upon a most convenient distinction to remove all difficulties, by determining that as a *bird* indeed it was unlawful prize, but as a mouse she might very conscientiously eat it ; and accordingly without further debate fell to the repast.

Thus it is that men are apt to impose upon themselves by vain and groundless distinctions, when conscience and principle are at variance with interest and inclination.

FABLE XLVII.

The two Lizards.

AS two Lizards were basking under a south wall, how contemptible, said one of them, is our condition ! We exist, 'tis true, but that is all ; for we hold no sort of rank in the creation, and are utterly unnoticed by the world.

Curled obscurity ! Why was I not rather born a stag, to range at large, the pride and glory of some royal forest ? It happened that in the midst of these unjust murmurs, a pack of hounds was heard in full cry after the very creature he was envying, who being quite spent with the chase, was torn in pieces by the dogs in sight of our two lizards. And is this the lordly stag, whose place in the creation you wished to hold ? replied the wiser lizard to his complaining friend. Let his sad fate teach you to bless providence for placing you in that humbler situation, which secures you from the dangers of a more elevated rank.

F A B L E XLVIII.

Jupiter's Lottery.

JUPITER, in order to please mankind, directed Mercury to give notice that he had established a lottery, in which there were no blanks : and that amongst a variety of other valuable chances, wisdom was the highest prize. It was Jupiter's command that in this Lottery some of the gods should also become adventurers. The tickets being disposed of, and the wheels placed, Mercury was employed to preside at the drawing. It happened that the best prize fell to Minerva : upon which a general murmur ran through the assembly, and hints were thrown out that Jupiter had used some unfair practices to secure this desirable lot to his daughter. Jupiter, that he might at once both punish and silence these impious clamours of the human race, presented them with folly in the place of wisdom ; with which they went away perfectly well contented : and from that time the
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greatest fools have always looked upon themselves as the wisest men.

F A B L E XLIX.

The litigious Cats.

TWO cats having stolen some cheese, could not agree about dividing their prize. In order therefore to settle the dispute, they consented to refer the matter to a monkey. The proposed arbitrator very readily accepted the office, and producing a ballance, put a part into each scale. "Let me see— (said he) ay— this lump outweighs the other :—" and immediately bit off a considerable piece in order to reduce it, he observed, to an equilibrium. The opposite scale was now become the heaviest ; which afforded our conscientious judge an additional reason for a second mouthful. Hold, hold, said the two cats, who began to be alarmed for the event, give us our respective shares and we are satisfied. If *you* are satisfied, returned the monkey, justice is not : a case of this intricate nature is by no means so soon determined. Upon which he continued to nibble first one piece and then the other, till the poor cats seeing their cheese gradually diminishing, intreated him to give himself no farther trouble, but to deliver to them what remained. Not so fast, I beseech ye, friends, replied the monkey ; we owe justice to ourselves as well as to you : what remains is due to me in right of my office. Upon which, he stuffed the whole into his mouth, and with great gravity dismissed the court.

F A B L E L.

The two Dogs.

HA S T Y and inconsiderate connexions are generally attended with great disadvantages: and much of every man's good or ill fortune depends upon the choice he makes of his friends.

A good-natured spaniel overtook a surly mastiff, as he was travelling upon the high road. Tray, altho' an entire stranger to Tyger, very civilly accosted him: And if it would be no interruption, he said, he should be glad to bear him company on his way. Tyger, who happened not to be altogether in so growling a mood as usual, accepted the proposal: and they very amicably pursued their journey together. In the midst of their conversation they arrived at the next village; where Tyger began to display his malignant disposition, by an unprovoked attack upon every dog he met. The villagers immediately sallied forth with great indignation to rescue their respective favourites; and falling upon our two friends without distinction or mercy, poor Tray was most cruelly treated, for no other reason but from being found in bad company.

F A B L E LI.

Death and Cupid.

JU P I T E R sent forth Death and Cupid to travel round the world, giving each of them a bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows at his back. It was ordered by the disposer of human affairs, that the arrows of Love should only wound the young, in order to supply the decays of mortal

mortal men ; and those of Death were to strike old age, and free the world from a useless charge. Our travellers being one day extremely fatigued with their journey, rested themselves under the covert of a wood, and throwing down their arrows in a promiscuous manner before them, they both fell fast asleep. They had not reposed themselves long, before they were awakened by a sudden noise ; when hastily gathering up their arms, each in the confusion took by mistake some of the darts that belonged to the other. By this means, it frequently happened that Death vanquished the young, and Cupid subdued the old. Jupiter observed the error, but did not think proper to redress it ; foreseeing that some good might arise from their unlucky exchange. And in fact, if men were wise, they would learn from this mistake to be apprehensive of death in their youth, and to guard against the amorous passions in their old age.

F A B L E LII.

The Mock-bird.

TH E R E is a certain bird in the West-Indies, which has the faculty of mimicking the notes of every other songster, without being able himself to add any original strain to the concert. As one of these mock-birds was displaying his talent of ridicule among the branches of a venerable wood : 'Tis very well, said a little songster, speaking in the name of all the rest, we grant you that our music is not without its faults : but why will you not favour us with a strain of your own ?

F A B L E LIII.

The Spectacles.

HOW strangely all mankind differ in their opinions! and how strongly each is attached to his own!

Jupiter one day, enjoying himself over a bowl of nectar, and in a merry humour, determined to make mankind a present. Momus was appointed to convey it to them; who mounted on a rapid car, was presently on earth. Come hither, says he, ye happy mortals; great Jupiter has opened for your benefit his all-gracious hands. 'Tis true, he made you somewhat short-sighted, but to remedy that inconvenience, behold how he has favoured you! So saying, he unloosed his portmanteau; an infinite number of spectacles tumbled out, and mankind picked them up with great eagerness. There was enow for all, every man had his pair. But it was soon found that these spectacles did not represent objects to all mankind alike: for one pair was *purple*, another *blue*; one was *white*, and another *black*: some of the glasses were *red*, some *green*, and some *yellow*. In short, there were of all manner of colours, and every shade of colour. However, notwithstanding this diversity, every man was charmed with his own, as believing it the best; and enjoyed in *opinion*, all the satisfaction of *truth*.

F A B L E S.

B O O K III.

NEWLY INVENTED.

F A B L E I.

The Red-breast and the Sparrow.

AS a Red-breast was singing on a tree by the side of a rural cottage, a Sparrow perched upon the thatch took occasion thus to reprimand him. And dost thou, said he, with thy dull autumnal note, presume to emulate the *Birds of Spring*? Can thy weak warblings pretend to vie with the sprightly accents of the Thrush and the Blackbird? with the various melody of the Lark or Nightingale? whom other birds far thy superiours, have been long content to admire in silence. Judge with *candour* at least, replied the Robbin; nor impute those efforts to ambition solely, which may sometimes flow from the *love of art*. I reverence indeed, but by no means envy, the birds whose fame has stood the test of ages. Their songs *have* charmed both hill and dale; but their season is past, and their throats are silent. I feel not however,

however, the ambition to surpass or equal them : my efforts are of a much humbler nature ; and I may surely hope for pardon, while I endeavour to cheer these forsaken valleys, by an attempt to *imitate the strains I love.*

F A B L E II.

The two Bees.

ON a fine morning in May, two bees set forward in quest of honey ; the one wise and temperate, the other careless and extravagant. They soon arrived at a garden enriched with aromatic herbs ; the most fragrant flowers, and the most delicious fruits. They regaled themselves for a time on the various dainties that were spread before them : the one loading his thigh at intervals with provisions for the hive against the distant winter ; the other, revelling in sweets without regard to any thing but his present gratification. At length they found a wide-mouthed phial, that hung beneath the bough of a peach tree, filled with honey ready tempered, and exposed to their taste in the most alluring manner. The thoughtless *epicure*, spite of all his friend's remonstrances, plunged headlong into the vessel, resolving to indulge himself in all the pleasures of sensuality. The *Philosopher*, on the other hand, sipped a little with caution, but being suspicious of danger, flew off to fruits and flowers ; where by the moderation of his meals, he improved his relish for the true enjoyment of them. In the evening, however, he called upon his friend, to enquire whether he would return to the hive ; but found him surfeited in sweets, which he was as unable to *leave*, as to *enjoy*. Clogged in his wings, enfeebled in his feet, and his whole frame totally enervated, he was but
just

just able to bid his friend adieu, and to lament with his latest breath, that though a taste of pleasure might quicken the relish of life, an unrestrained indulgence is inevitable destruction.

F A B L E III.

The Diamond and the Glow-worm.

A Diamond happened to fall from the *solitaire* of a young lady as she was walking one evening on a terrace in her garden. A Glow-worm who had beheld it sparkle in its descent, soon as the gloom of night had eclipsed its lustre, began to mock and to insult it. Art thou that wonderful thing that vauntest of such prodigious brightness? Where now is all thy boasted brilliancy? Alas, in evil hour has fortune thrown thee within the reach of my superior blaze. Conceited insect, replied the gem, that owest thy feeble glimmer to the darkness that surrounds thee: know, my lustre bears the test of day, and even derives its chief advantage from that distinguishing light, which discovers thee to be no more than a dark and paltry worm.

F A B L E IV.

The Ostrich and the Pelican.

THE Ostrich one day met the Pelican, and observing her breast all bloody, Good God! says she to her, what is the matter? What accident has befallen you? You certainly have been seized by some savage beast of prey, and have with difficulty escaped from his merciless claws. Do not be surprised, friend, replied the Pelican: no such accident, nor indeed anything more than common, hath

hath happened to me. I have only been engaged in my ordinary employment of tending my nest, of feeding my dear little ones, and nourishing them with the vital blood from my bosom. Your answer, returned the Ostrich, astonishes me still more than the horrid figure you make. What, is this your practice, to tear your own flesh, to spill your own blood, and to sacrifice yourself in this cruel manner to the importunate cravings of your young ones? I know not which to pity most, your misery or your folly. Be advised by me; have some regard for yourself; and leave off this barbarous custom of mangling your own body: as for your children, commit them to the care of providence, and make yourself quite easy about them. My example may be of use to you. I lay my eggs upon the ground, and just cover them lightly over with sand: if they have the good luck to escape being crushed by the tread of man or beast, the warmth of the sun broods upon, and hatches them; and in due time my young ones come forth: I leave them to be nursed by nature, and fostered by the elements; I give myself no trouble about them, and I neither know nor care what becomes of them. Unhappy wretch, says the Pelican, who hardenest thyself against thy own offspring, and thro' want of natural affection renderest thy travail fruitless to thyself! who knowest not the sweets of a parent's anxiety; the tender delight of a mother's sufferings! It is not I, but thou that art cruel to thy own flesh. Thy insensibility may exempt thee from a temporary inconvenience, and an inconsiderable pain: but at the same time it makes thee inattentive to a most necessary duty, and incapable of relishing the pleasure that attends it; a pleasure, the most exquisite that nature hath indulged to us; in which pain itself is swallowed up and lost, or only serves to heighten the enjoyment.

FABLE

F A B L E V.

The Hounds in Couples.

A Huntsman was leading forth his Hounds one morning to the chace, and had linked several of the young dogs in Couples, to prevent their following every scent, and hunting disorderly, as their own inclinations and fancy should direct them. Among others, it was the fate of jowler and vixen to be thus yoked together. Jowler and vixen were both young and unexperienced; but had for some time been constant companions, and seemed to have entertained a great fondness for each other; they used to be perpetually playing together, and in any quarrel that happened, always took one another's part; it might have been expected therefore that it would not be disagreeable to them to be still more closely united. However in fact it proved otherwise: they had not been long joined together before both parties began to express uneasiness at their present situation. Different inclinations and opposite wills began to discover and to exert themselves: if one chose to go this way, the other was as eager to take the contrary; if one was pressing forward, the other was sure to lag behind; vixen pulled back jowler, and jowler dragged along vixen: jowler growled at vixen, and vixen snapped at jowler: till at last it came to a downright quarrel between them: and jowler treated vixen in a very rough and ungenerous manner, without any regard to the inferiority of her strength, or the tenderness of her sex. As they were thus continually vexing and tormenting one another, an old hound, who had observed all that passed, came up to them and thus reproved them: "What a couple of silly puppies
you

you are to be perpetually worrying yourselves at this rate! What hinders your going on peaceably and quietly together? Cannot you compromise the matter between you by each consulting the other's inclination a little! at least, try to make a virtue of necessity, and submit to what you cannot remedy: you cannot get rid of the chain; but you may make it fit easy upon you. I am an old dog, and let my age and experience instruct you: when I was in the same circumstances with you, I soon found, that thwarting my companion was only tormenting myself; and my yoke-fellow happily came into the same way of thinking. We endeavoured to join in the same pursuits, and to follow one another's inclinations; and so we jogged on together, not only with ease and quiet, but with comfort and pleasure. We found by experience, that mutual compliance not only compensates for liberty, but is even attended with a satisfaction and delight, beyond what liberty itself can give."

F A B L E VI.

The Miser and the Magpye.

AS a Miser sat at his desk, counting over his heaps of gold; a magpye eloping from his cage, picked up a guinea, and hopped away with it. The Miser, who never failed to count his money over a second time, immediately missed the piece, and rising up from his seat in the utmost consternation, observed the felon hiding it in a crevice of the floor. And art *thou*, cried he, that worst of thieves, *who* hast robbed me of my gold, without the plea of necessity, and without regard to its proper use? But
thy

thy life shall atone for so preposterous a villany. Soft words, good master, quoth the Magpye. Have I then injured you, in any other sense than you defraud the publick? And am I not using your money in the same manner you do yourself? If I must lose my life for hiding a single guinea, what do you, I pray, deserve, who secrete so many thousands?

FABLE VII.

The sensitive Plant and the Thistle.

A Thistle happened to spring up very near to a sensitive Plant. The former observing the extream bashfulness and delicacy of the latter, addressed her in the following manner. Why are you so modest and reserved, my good neighbour, as to withdraw your leaves at the approach of strangers? Why do you shrink as if you were afraid, from the touch of every hand? Take example and advice from me: if I liked not their familiarity, I would make them keep their distance, nor should any saucy finger provoke me unrevenged. Our tempers and qualities, replied the other, are widely different: I have neither the ability nor inclination to give offence: you it seems are by no means destitute of either. My desire is to live peaceably in the station wherein I am placed; and tho' my humility may now and then cause me a moment's uneasiness, it tends on the whole to preserve my tranquillity. The case is otherwise with you, whose irritable temper, and revengeful disposition, will probably one time or other be the cause of your destruction. While they were thus arguing the point, the gardener came with his little spaddle, in order to lighten the earth
round

round the stem of the Sensitive Plant ; but perceiving the Thistle, he thrust his instrument thro' the root of it, and directly tossed it out of his garden.

F A B L E VIII.

The Poet and the Death-Watch.

AS a Poet sat in his closet, feasting his imagination on the hopes of fame and immortality ; he was startled on a sudden with the ominous sound of a Death-watch. However, immediately recollecting himself, vain insect, said he, cease thy impertinent forebodings, sufficient indeed to fright the weakness of women or of children ; but far beneath the notice of a Poet and Philosopher. As for me, whatever accident may threaten my life, my fame, spite of thy prognostics, shall live to future ages. May be so, replied the insect, I find at least, thou hadst rather listen to the maggot in thy head, than to the worm beneath thy table : but know, that the suggestions of vanity are altogether as deceitful as those of superstition.

F A B L E IX.

Pythagoras and the Critic.

PYTHAGORAS was one day very earnestly engaged in taking an exact measure of the length of the olympic course. One of those conceited Critics, who aim at every thing, and are ready to interpose with their opinion upon all subjects, happened to be present ; and could not help smiling to himself to see the Philosopher so employed, and to observe what great

great attention and pains he bestowed upon such a business. And pray, says he, accosting Pythagoras, may I presume to ask, with what design you have given yourself this trouble? Of that, replied the Philosopher, I shall very readily inform you. We are assured, that Hercules, when he instituted the olympic games, himself laid out this course by measure, and determined it to the length of six hundred feet, measuring it by the standard of his own foot. Now by taking an exact measure of this space, and seeing how much it exceeds the measure of the same number of feet now in use, we can find how much the foot of Hercules, and in proportion his whole stature, exceeded that of the present generation. A very curious speculation, says the Critic, and of great use and importance, no doubt! And so you will demonstrate to us, that the bulk of this fabulous hero was equal to his extravagant enterprizes and his marvellous exploits. And pray, Sir, what may be the result of your enquiry at last? I suppose, you can now tell me exactly to a hair's breadth how tall Hercules was. The result of my enquiry, replied the philosopher, is this; and it is a conclusion of greater use and importance than you seem to expect from it; that if you will always estimate the labours of the philosopher, the designs of the patriot, and the actions of the hero, by the standard of your own narrow conceptions, you will ever be greatly mistaken in your judgment concerning them.

F A B L E X.

The Bear.

A Bear who was bred in the savage desarts of *Siberia*, had an inclination to see the world. He

He travelled from forest to forest, and from one kingdom to another, making many profound observations in his way. Among the rest of his excursions, he came by accident into a farmer's yard, where he saw a number of poultry standing to drink by the side of a pool. Observing that at every sip they turned up their heads toward the sky, he could not forbear enquiring the reason of so peculiar a ceremony. They told him that it was by way of returning thanks to heaven for the benefits they received; and was indeed an ancient and religious custom, which they could not, with a safe conscience, or without impiety, omit. Here the Bear burst into a fit of laughter, at once mimicking their gestures, and ridiculing their superstition, in the most contemptuous manner. On this, the Cock, with a spirit suitable to the boldness of his character, addressed him in the following words: As you are a stranger, Sir, you perhaps may be excused the indecency of this behaviour; yet give me leave to tell you, that none but a *Bear* would ridicule any religious ceremonies whatsoever, in the presence of those who believe them of importance.

F A B L E XI.

The Stork and the Crow.

A Stork and a Crow had once a strong contention, which of them stood highest in the favour of Jupiter. The Crow alledged his skill in omens, his infallibility in prophecies, and his great use to the priests of that deity in all their sacrifices and religious ceremonies. The Stork urged only his blameless life, the care he took to preserve his offspring, and the assistance he lent his parents under the infirmities of age. It happened, as it generally does in religious disputes, that
neither

neither of them could confute the other ; so they both agreed to refer the decision to Jupiter himself. On their joint application, the god determined thus between them. Let *none* of my creatures despair of my regard : I know their weakness ; I pity their errors ; and whatever is well meant, I accept as it was intended. Yet sacrifices or ceremonies are in *themselves* of no importance, and every attempt to penetrate the counsels of the gods, is altogether as vain as it is presumptuous : but he who pays to Jupiter a just honour and reverence, who leads the most temperate life, and who does the most good in proportion to his abilities ; as he best answers the end of his creation will assuredly stand highest in the favour of his creator.

F B A L E XII.

Echo and the Owl.

THE vain hear the flatteries of their own imagination, and fancy them to be the voice of fame.

A solemn Owl, puffed up with vanity, sat repeating her *screams* at midnight, from the hollow of a blasted oak. And whence, cried she, proceeds this awful silence, unless it be to favour my superiour melody ? Surely the groves are hushed in expectation of my voice, and when I sing, all nature listens. An Echo resounding from an adjacent rock, replied immediately, “ all nature listens.” The nightingale, resumed she, has *usurped* the sovereignty by night : *her* note indeed is musical, but *mine* is sweeter far. The voice confirming her opinion, replied again, “ is sweeter far.” Why then am I diffident, continued she, why do I fear to join the tuneful choir ? The
Echo

Echo, still flattering her vanity, repeated, "join the tuneful choir." Roused by this empty phantom of encouragement, she on the morrow mingled her hootings with the harmony of the groves. But the tuneful songsters, disgusted with her noise, and affronted by her impudence, unanimously drove her from the society, and still continue to pursue her where ever she appears.

F A B L E XIII.

Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS formed man of the finest clay, and animated his work with fire stolen from heaven. He endowed him with all the faculties that are to be found amongst the animal creation : he gave him the courage of the lion, the subtlety of the fox, the providence of the ant, and the industry of the bee ; and he enabled him, by the superiority of his understanding, to subdue them all, and to make them subservient to his use and pleasure. He discovered to him the metals hidden in the bowels of the earth, and shewed him their several uses. He instructed him in every thing that might tend to cultivate and civilize human life : he taught him to till the ground, and to improve the fertility of nature ; to build houses, to cover himself with garments, and to defend himself against the inclemencies of the air and the seasons ; to compound medicines of salutary herbs, to heal wounds, and to cure diseases ; to construct ships, to cross the seas, and to communicate to every country the riches of all. In a word, he indued him with sense and memory, with sagacity and invention, with art and science : and to crown all, he gave him an insight into futurity. But, alas ! this latter gift, instead of improving,
wholly

wholly destroyed the proper effect of all the former. Furnished with all the means and instruments of happiness, man nevertheless was miserable ; thro' the knowledge and dread of future evil, he was incapable of enjoying present good. Prometheus saw, and immediately resolved to remedy this inconvenience : he effectually restored man to a capacity of happiness, by depriving him of *pre-science*, and giving him *hope* in its stead.

F A B L E XIV.

Momus.

TIS said that Momus was perpetually blaming and ridiculing whatever he saw. Even the works of the gods themselves could not escape his universal censure. The eyes of the bull, he said, were so placed by Jupiter, that they could not direct his horns in pushing at his enemies. The houses which Minerva had instructed men to build, were contrived so very injudiciously, that they could not remove them from a bad neighbourhood, nor from any other inconvenience. In short, the frame of man himself was in *his* opinion extremely defective ; having no window in his bosom that might demonstrate his sincerity, or betray his wicked purposes and prevent their execution. These and many other faults were found in the productions of nature ; but when he surveyed the works of art, there was no end of his altercations. Jupiter, being resolved to try how far his malice would proceed, sent his daughter Venus to desire that he would give his opinion of her beauty. She appeared accordingly before the churlish god, trembling at the apprehension of his known severity. He examined her proportions with all the rigour of an
envious

envious critic. But her shape and complexion were so striking, and her smiles and graces so very engaging, that he found it impossible to give the least colour to any objection he could make. Yet, to shew how hard malevolence will struggle for a cavil; as she was retiring from his presence, he begged she would acquaint her father, that whatever grace might be in her motion, yet,—*her slippers were too noisy.*

F A B L E XV.

The Butterfly, the Snail, and the Bee.

A Butterfly, proudly perched on the gawdy leaves of a french marygold, was boasting the vast extent and variety of his travels. I have ranged, said he, over the graceful and majestic scenes of † *Hagley*, and have feasted my eyes with elegance and variety at * *The Leasowes*. I have wandered thro' regions of Eglantine and Honey-suckle, I have revelled in kisses on beds of Violets and Cowslips, and have enjoyed the delicious fragrance of Roses and Carnations. In short, my fancy unbounded, and my flights unrestrained, I have visited with perfect freedom all the flowers of the field or garden, and must be allowed to *know the world*, in a superlative degree.

A Snail, who hung attentive to his wonders on a cabbage-leaf was struck with admiration; and concluded him, from all this experience, to be the wisest of animal creatures.

It happened that a Bee pursued her occupation on a neighbouring bed of marjoram, and having heard our ostentatious vagrant, reprimanded him in this manner. Vain, empty flutterer, said she, whom instruction cannot improve, nor experience
itself

† Lord Lyttelton's.

* Mr. Shenstone's.

itself enlighten ! Thou hast rambled over the world ; wherein does thy knowledge of it consist ? Thou hast seen variety of objects ; what conclusions hast thou drawn from them ? Thou hast tasted of every amusement ; hast thou extracted any thing for *use* ? I too am a traveller : go and look into my hive ; and let my treasures *shadow out* to thee , that the intent of travelling is , to collect materials either for the use and emolument of *private life* , or for the advantage of the *community*.

FABLE XVI.

The Tuberoſe and the Sun-flower.

A Tuberoſe in a bow-window on the north-side of a ſtately villa, addreſs'd a Sun-flower which grew on a ſlope, that was contiguous to the houſe. Pray, ſays he, neighbour *Turnſole*, to what purpoſe do you pay all this devotion to that fictitious deity of yours, the Sun ? Why are you continually diſtorting your body, and caſting up your eyes to that glaring luminary ? What ſuperſtition induces you to think, that we flowers exiſt only thro' *his* influence ? Both you and I are ſurely indebted to the hot-bed, and to the diligence of the gardener, for our production and ſupport. For my part, I ſhall reſerve my homage, together with my ſweets, for that benevolent maſter who is continually watering and reſreſhing me : nor do I deſire ever to ſee the face of that Sun you ſo vainly idolize, while I can enjoy the cool ſhade of this magnificent ſaloon. Truce with thy blaſphemies, replied the Sun-flower : why doſt thou revile that glorious being, who diſpenſes life and vigour, not only to *us*, but to every part of the creation ? Without this, alas ! how ineffectual were the ſkill and vigilance of thy boatt-

ed master, either to support *thy* tender frame, or even to preserve his *own*! But this must ever be the case with such *contracted* understandings: sufficient, indeed, to point out our more immediate benefactors, without regarding that original source, from which *all* beneficence proceeds.

F A B L E XVII.

The Magpye and the Raven.

THERE was a certain Mag-pye, more busy and more loquacious than any of his tribe. His tongue was in perpetual motion, and himself continually upon the wing; fluttering from place to place, and very seldom appearing twice together in the same company.

Sometimes you saw him with a flock of pigeons, plundering a field of new sown corn; anon, perch'd upon a cherry-tree with a parcel of tom-tits: The next moment, you would be surpriz'd to find the same individual bird engaged with a flight of crows, and feasting upon a carcase.

He took it one day into his head to visit an old Raven, who lived retir'd among the branches of a venerable oak; and there, at the foot of a lonely mountain, had past near half a century.

I admire, says the prating bird, your most romantick situation, and the wildness of these rocks and precipices around you: I am absolutely transported with the murmur of that water-fall: methinks it diffuses a tranquillity, surpassing all the joys of publick life. What an agreeable sequestration from worldly bustle and impertinence! what an opportunity of contemplating the divine beauties of nature! I shall most certainly, my dear, quit the gaieties of town, and for the sake
of

of these rural scenes, and my good friend's conversation, pass the remainder of my days in the solitude he has chosen.

Well, Sir, replies the Raven, I shall be at all times glad to receive you in my old fashion'd way; but *you* and I should certainly prove most unsuitable companions. *Your* whole ambition is to shine in company, and to recommend yourself to the world by universal complaisance: whereas *my* greatest happiness consists in ease and privacy, and the select conversation of a few whom I esteem. I prefer a good heart to the most voluble tongue; and tho' questionless oblig'd to you for the politeness of your professions, yet I see your benevolence divided among so *numerous* an *acquaintance*, that a very slender share of it can remain for those you are pleased to honour with the name of *friends*.

F A B L E XVIII.

The Diamond and the Loadstone.

A Diamond of great beauty and lustre, observing not only many other gems of a lower class ranged together with him in the same cabinet, but a Loadstone likewise placed not far from him, began to question the latter how he came there; and what pretensions he had to be ranked among the precious stones; he, who appeared to be no better than a mere flint; a sorry, coarse, rusty-looking pebble; without any the least shining quality to advance him to such an honour; and concluded with desiring him to keep his distance, and pay a proper respect to his superiors. I find, said the Loadstone, that you judge by external appearances; and it is your interest, that others should form their judgment by the same rule. I must

OWE

own I have nothing to boast of in that respect; but I may venture to say, that I make amends for my outward defects, by my inward qualities. The great improvement of navigation in these latter ages is entirely owing to me. It is owing to me, that the distant parts of the world are known and accessible to each other; that the remotest nations are connected together, and all in a manner united into one common society; that by a mutual intercourse they relieve one another's wants, and all enjoy the several blessings peculiar to each. Great Britain is indebted to me for her wealth, her splendour, and her power; and the arts and sciences are in a great measure obliged to me for their late improvements, and their continual increase. I am willing to allow you your due praise in its full extent; you are a very pretty bawble; I am mightily delighted to see you glitter and sparkle; I look upon you with pleasure and surprise: but I must be convinced that you are of some sort of use, before I acknowledge that you have any real merit, or treat you with that respect which you seem to demand.

F A B L E XIX.

The Boy and the Nettle.

A Little Boy, playing in the fields, chanced to be stung by a Nettle, and came crying to his father: he told him, he had been hurt by that nasty weed several times before; that he was always afraid of it: and that now he did but just touch it as lightly as possible, when he was so severely stung. Child, says he, your touching it so gently and timorously is the very *reason* of its hurting you. A Nettle may be handled safely, if you do it with courage and resolution: if you
seize

seize it boldly, and gripe it fast, depend upon't it will never sting you; and you will meet with many sorts of persons, as well as things in the world, which ought to be treated in the very same manner.

F A B L E XX.

The Monster in the Sun.

AN Astronomer was observing the Sun thro' a telescope, in order to take an exact draught of the several spots, which appear upon the face of it. While he was intent upon his observations, he was on a sudden surpris'd with a new and astonishing appearance; a large portion of the surface of the Sun was at once covered by a Monster of enormous size, and horrible form; it had an immense pair of wings, a great number of legs, and a long and vast proboscis; and that it was alive, was very apparent, from his quick and violent motions, which the observer could from time to time plainly perceive. Being sure of the fact, (for how could he be mistaken in what he saw so clearly?) our Philosopher began to draw many surpris'ing conclusions from premises so well established. He calculated the magnitude of this extraordinary animal; and found that he covered about two square degrees of the Sun's surface; that placed upon the earth he would spread over half one hemisphere of it; and that he was seven or eight times as big as the moon. But what was most astonishing, was the prodigious heat that he must endure: it was plain, that he was something of the nature of the salamander, but of a far more fiery temperament; for it was demonstrable from the clearest principles, that in his present situation he must have acquired a degree of

heat two thousand times exceeding that of red hot iron. It was a problem worth considering, whether he subsisted upon the gross vapours of the Sun, and so from time to time cleared away those spots which they are perpetually forming, and which would otherwise wholly obscure and incrustate its face; or whether it might not feed on the solid substance of the orb itself, which by this means, together with the constant expence of light, must soon be exhausted and consumed; or whether he was not now and then supplied by the falling of some eccentric Comet into the Sun. However this might be, he found by computation that the earth would be but short allowance for him for a few months: and farther, it was no improbable conjecture, that, as the earth was destined to be destroyed by fire, this fiery flying monster would remove hither at the appointed time, and might much more easily and conveniently effect a conflagration, than any Comet, hitherto provided for that service. In the earnest pursuit of these, and many the like deep and curious speculations, the Astronomer was engaged, and was preparing to communicate them to the publick. In the mean time, the discovery began to be much talked of; and all the *virtuosi* gathered together to see so strange a sight. They were equally convinced of the accuracy of the observation, and of the conclusions so clearly deduced from it. At last, one, more cautious than the rest, was resolved, before he gave a full assent to the report of his senses, to examine the whole process of the affair, and all the parts of the instrument: he opened the Telescope, and behold! a small Fly was inclosed in it, which having settled on the center of the object-glass had given occasion to all this marvellous Theory.

How

How often do men, thro' prejudice and passion, thro' envy and malice, fix upon the brightest and most exalted characters, the grossest and most improbable imputations. It behoves us upon such occasions to be upon our guard, and to suspend our judgments ; the fault perhaps is not in the *object*, but in the *mind* of the observer.

F A B L E XXI.

The discontented Bee.

A Bee complained to Jupiter, of the numerous evils to which her condition exposed her. Her body, she said, was weak and feeble, yet was she condemned to get her living by perpetual toil ; she was benumbed by the cold of winter, and relaxed by the heat of summer. Her haunts were infected with poisonous weeds, and her flights obstructed by storms and tempests. In short, what with dangers from without, and diseases from within, her life was rendered one continual scene of anxiety and wretchedness. Behold now, said Jupiter, the forwardness and folly of this unthankful race ! The flowers of the field I have spread before them as a feast, and have endeavoured to regale them with an endless variety. They now revel on odoriferous beds of thyme and lavender, and now on the still more fragrant banks of violets and roses. The business they complain of, is the extraction of honey ; and, to alleviate their toil, I have allowed them wings, which readily transport them from one delicious banquet to another. Storms, tempests, and noxious weeds, I have given them sagacity to shun ; and if ever they are misled, 'tis thro' the perverseness of their inclinations. But thus it is with Bees and thus with Men : they misconstrue

the benevolence of my designs, and then complain that my decrees are rigid: they ungratefully overlook all the advantages, and magnify all the inconveniencies of their station. But let my creatures pursue their happiness, through the paths marked out by nature; and they will then feel no pains, which they have not pleasures to compensate.

F A B L E XXII.

The Snipe Shooter.

AS a sportsman ranged the fields with his gun, attended by an experienced old spaniel, he happened to spring a Snipe; and, nearly at the same instant, a covey of Partridges. Surprised at the accident, and divided in his aim, he let fly too indeterminately, and by this means missed them *both*. Ah, my good master, said the spaniel, you should never have two aims at once. Had you not been dazzled and seduced by the extravagant hope of Partridge, you would most probably have secured your Snipe.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Beggar and his Dog.

ABeggar and his Dog sate at the gate of a noble Courtier, and were preparing to make a meal on a bowl of fragments from the Kitchen-maid. A poor dependant of his Lordship's, who had been sharing the singular favour of a dinner at the steward's table, was struck with their appearance, and stopped a little to observe them. The Beggar, hungry and voracious as any Courtier in Christendom, seized with greediness
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the choicest morsels, and swallowed them himself ; the residue was divided into portions for his children. A scrag was thrust into one pocket for *honest* Jack, a crust into another for *bashful* Tom, and a luncheon of cheele wrapt up with care for the little favourite of his *hopeful* family. In short, if any thing was thrown to the Dog, it was a bone so closely picked, that it scarce afforded a pittance to keep life and soul together. How exactly alike, said the dependent, is this poor Dog's case and mine ! he is watching for a dinner from a master who cannot spare it ; I for a place from a needy Lord, whose wants perhaps are greater than my own ; and whose relations, more clamorous than any of this Beggar's brats. Shrewdly was it said by an ingenious writer, a *Courtier's Dependant is a Beggar's Dog*.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Sun and the Vapour.

IN the evening of a summer's day, as the Sun descended behind the western hills, he beheld a thick and unwholsome Vapour extending itself over the whole face of the vallies. Every shrub and every flower immediately folded up its leaves, and shrunk from the touch of this detested *enemy*. Well hast thou chosen, said the God of day, this the hour of my departure, to spread thy pestilential influence, and taint the beauties of creation. Enjoy for a short space the notable triumphs of thy malignity. I shall return again with the morning, repair thy mischiefs, and put an end to thy existence. May the *slanderer*, in *thine* discern the sad fate of *calumny*, and be warned to dread the return of the *Truth*.

FABLE XXV.

Love and Folly.

IN the most early state of things, and among the eldest of beings, existed that God, as the poets intitle him, or rather that Dæmon, as Plato calls him, whose name is Love. He was assisting to the father of the Gods in reducing Chaos into order, in establishing the harmony of the universe, and in regulating and putting in execution the laws by which the operations of nature are performed, and the frame of the world subsists. Universal good seemed to be his only study, and he was the supreme delight both of Gods and men. But in process of time, among other disorders that arose in the universe, it appeared, that Love began to deviate very often from what had seemed till now to be his chief pursuit: he would raise frequent disturbances and confusion in the course of nature; tho' it was always under the pretence of maintaining order and agreement. It seems he had entered into a very intimate acquaintance with a person, who had but lately made her appearance in the world. This person was Folly, the daughter of Pride and Ignorance. They were very often together, and as often as they were, some mischief was sure to be the consequence. By degrees he introduced her into the heavens; where it was their great joy by various artifices to lead the Gods into such measures, as involved them in many inconveniencies, and exposed them to much ridicule. They deluded them all in their turns, except Minerva, the only divinity that escaped their wiles. Even Jupiter himself was induced by them to take some steps not at all suitable to the dignity

nity of his character. Folly had gotten the intire ascendant over her companion; however, she was resolved to make still more sure of him, and engross him wholly to herself: with this design she infused a certain intoxicating juice into his nectar, the effects of which were so powerful, that in the end it utterly deprived him of his sight. Love was too much prejudiced in her favour, to apprehend her to be the cause of his misfortune; nor indeed did he seem to be in the least sensible of his condition. But his mother Venus soon found it out: and in the excess of her grief and rage carried her complaint to Jupiter, conjuring him to punish the sorcerers who had blinded her son. Jupiter, willing to clear the heavens of such troublesome company, called both parties before him, and inquired into their conduct. After a full hearing, he determined, that Folly should make some sort of reparation for the injury done to Love: and being resolved to punish both for the many irregularities which they had lately introduced, he condemned Love to wander about the earth, and ordered Folly to be his guide.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Eclipse.

ON E day when the Moon was under an Eclipse, she complained thus to the Sun of the discontinuance of his favours. My dearest friend, said she, why do you not shine upon me as you used to do? Do I *not* shine upon thee? said the Sun; I am very sure that I *intend* it. O no, replies the Moon, but I now perceive the reason. I see that dirty planet the earth is got between us.

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The good influences of the great would perhaps be more diffusive, were it not for their mischievous dependants, who are so frequently suffered to interpose.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Boy and the Butterfly.

A Boy, greatly smitten with the colours of a Butterfly, pursued it from flower to flower with indefatigable pains. First he aimed to surprise it among the leaves of a rose ; then to cover it with his hat, as it was feeding on a daisy ; now hoped to secure it, as it rested on a sprig of myrtle ; and now grew sure of his prize, perceiving it loiter on a bed of violets. But the fickle Fly, continually changing one blossom for another, still eluded his attempts. At length, observing it half buried in the cup of a tulip, he rushed forward, and snatching it with violence, crushed it all to pieces. The dying insect, seeing the poor boy somewhat chagrined at his disappointment, addressed him with all the calmness of a stoic, in the following manner.—Behold now the end of thy unprofitable sollicitude ! and learn, for the benefit of thy future life, that all pleasure is but a painted Butterfly ; which, although it may serve to amuse thee in the pursuit, if embraced with too much ardour, will perish in thy grasp.

F A B L E XXVIII.

The Toad and the Ephemeron.

AS some workmen were digging marble in a mountain of Scythia, they discerned a toad of an enormous size in the midst of a solid rock. They

They were very much surpris'd at so uncommon an appearance, and the more they considered the circumstance of it, the more their wonder increased. It was hard to conceive by what means this creature had preserved life and nourishment in so narrow a prison ; and still more difficult to account for his birth and existence in a place so totally inaccessible to all of his species. They could conclude no other, than that he was formed together with the rock in which he had been bred, and was coeval with the mountain itself. While they were pursuing these speculations the Toad sat swelling and bloating, till he was ready to burst with pride and self-importance ; to which at last he thus gave vent :—Yes, says he, you behold in me a specimen of the Antediluvian race of animals. I was begotten before the flood ; and who is there among the present upstart race of mortals, that shall dare to contend with me in nobility of birth or dignity of character ? An Ephemeron, sprung that morning from the river Hypanis, as he was flying about from place to place, chanced to be present, and observed all that passed with great attention and curiosity. Vain boaster, says he, what foundation hast thou for pride, either in thy descent, merely because it is ancient, or thy life, because it hath been long ? What good qualities hast thou received from thy ancestors ? Insignificant even to thyself, as well as useless to others, thou art almost as insensible as the block in which thou wast bred. Even I, that had my birth only from the scum of the neighbouring river, at the rising of this day's sun, and who shall die at its setting, have more reason to applaud my condition, than thou hast to be proud of thine. I have enjoyed the warmth of the sun, the light of the day, and the purity of the air : I have flown from stream to stream, from tree to tree, and from the plain

plain to the mountain : I have provided for posterity, and shall leave behind me a numerous offspring to people the next age of to-morrow : in short, I have fulfilled all the ends of my being, and I have been happy. My whole life, 'tis true, is but of twelve hours ; but even one hour of it is to be preferred to a thousand years of mere existence ; or that have been spent, like thine, in sloth, ignorance, and stupidity.

F A B L E XXIX.

The Peacock.

THE Peacock, who at first was distinguished only by a crest of feathers, preferred a petition to Juno that he might be honoured also with a train. As the bird was a particular favourite, Juno readily enough assented ; and his train was ordered to surpass that of every fowl in the creation. The Minion, conscious of his superb appearance, thought it requisite to assume a proportionable dignity of gait and manners. The common poultry of the farm-yard were quite astonish'd at his magnificence ; and even the pheasants themselves beheld him with an eye of envy. But when he attempted to fly, he perceived himself to have sacrificed all his *activity* to *ostentation*, and that he was encumbered by the pomp in which he placed his glory.

F A B L E XXX.

The Fly in St. Paul's Cupola.

AS a Fly was crawling leisurely up one of the columns of St. Paul's Cupola, she often stopped, surveyed, examined, and at last broke forth

forth into the following exclamation. Strange ! that any one who pretended to be an artist, should ever leave so superb a structure, with so many roughnesses unpolished ! Ah ! my friend ! said a very *learned architect*, who hung in his *web* under one of the capitals, you should never decide of things beyond the extent of your capacity. This lofty building was not erected for such diminutive animals as you or me ; but for a certain sort of creatures, who are at least ten thousand times as large : to their eyes, it is very possible, these columns may seem as smooth, as to you appear the wings of your favourite Mistress.

F A B L E XXXI.

The Elm Tree and the Vine.

AN extravagant young Vine, vainly ambitious of independency, and fond of rambling at large, despised the alliance of a stately Elm that grew near, and courted her embraces : Having risen to some small height without any kind of support, she shot forth her flimsy branches to a very uncommon and superfluous length ; calling on her neighbour to take notice how little she wanted his assistance. Poor infatuated shrub, replied the Elm, how inconsistent is thy conduct ! Would'st thou be *truly* independent, thou should'st carefully apply those juices to the enlargement of thy stem, which thou lavishest in vain upon unnecessary foliage. I shortly shall behold thee groveling on the ground ; yet countenanced, indeed, by many of the *human* race, who intoxicated with vanity, have despised œconomy ; and who, to support for a moment their empty boast of independence,

dence, have exhausted the very *source* of it in frivolous expences.

F A B L E. XXXII.

The Laurustinus and the Rose-tree.

IN the quarters of a shrubbery, where deciduous plants and ever-greens were intermingled with an air of negligence, it happened that a Rose grew not far from a Laurustinus. The Rose, enliven'd by the breath of *June*, and attir'd in all its gorgeous blossoms, looked with much contempt on the Laurustinus; who had nothing to display but the dusky verdure of its leaves. What a wretched neighbourhood, cried she, is this! and how unworthy to partake the honour of my company! better to bloom and die in the desert, than to associate myself here with such low and dirty vegetables. And is this my lot at last, whom every nation has agreed to honour, and every Poet conspired to reverence, as the undoubted sovereign of the field and garden? if I really am so, let my subjects at least keep their distance, and let a circle remain vacant round me, suitable to the state my rank requires. Here, gardener—bring thy hatchet; prithee cut down this Laurustinus; or at least remove it to its proper sphere. Be pacified, my lovely Rose, replied the Gardener; enjoy thy *sovereignty* with moderation, and thou shalt receive all the homage which thy beauty can require. But remember that in winter, when neither thou nor any of thy tribe produce one flower or leaf to cheer me, this faithful shrub, which thou despisest, will become the glory of my garden. Prudence therefore as well as gratitude is concerned, in the protection of a friend, that will shew his *Friendship in Adversity*.

FABLE

FABLE XXXIII.

The Sensitive Plant and the Palm-tree.

THE Sensitive Plant being brought out of the greenhouse on a fine summer's day, and placed in a beautiful grove adorned with the finest forest trees and the most curious plants, began to give himself great airs, and to treat all that were about him with much petulance and disdain. Lord! says he, how could the gardener think of setting me among a parcel of trees; gross inanimate things, mere vegetables, and perfect stocks! Sure he does not take *me* for a common plant, when he knows, that I have the sense of feeling in a more exquisite degree than he has himself. It really shocks me to see into what wretched low company he has introduced me: 'tis more than the delicacy of my constitution, and the extreme tenderness of my nerves, can bear. Pray, Mr. Acacia, stand a little farther off, and don't presume quite so much upon your idle pretence of being my cousin. Good Mr. Citron, keep your distance, I beseech you; your strong scent quite overpowers me. Friend Palm-tree, your offensive shade is really more than I am able to support. The lofty Palm-tree though little moved by so unmannerly an attack, condescended to rebuke the impertinent creature in the following manner. Thou vegetable fribble! learn to know thyself, and thy own worthlessness and insignificance. Thou valuest thyself on a vicious softness, a false delicacy, the very defect and imbecility of thy nature. What art thou good for, that shrinkest at a touch, and droopest at a breath of air; feeble and barren, a perpetual torment to thyself, and wholly useless to

to others. Whereas we, whom thou treatest with such disdain, make a grateful return to man for his care of us : some of us yield him fruit ; others are serviceable to him by their strength and firmness ; we shade him from the heat of the sun, and we defend him from the violence of the winds. I am particularly distinguished for my hardiness and perseverance, my steadiness and constancy : and on account of those very qualities which thou wantest and affectest to despise, have the honour to be made the emblem of conquest, and the reward of the Conqueror.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Tentyrites and the Ichneumon.

A Crocodile of prodigious size, and uncommon fierceness, infested the banks of the Nile, and spread desolation through all the neighbouring country. He seized the shepherd together with the sheep, and devoured the herdsmen as well as the cattle. Emboldened by success, and the terror which prevailed wherever he appeared, he ventured to carry his incursions even into the island of Tentyra, and to brave the people, who boast themselves the only tamers of his race. The Tentyrites themselves were struck with horror, at the appearance of a monster so much more terrible than they had ever seen before : even the boldest of them dared not to attack him openly ; and the most experienced long endeavoured with all their art and address to surprise him, but in vain. As they were consulting together, what they should do in these circumstances, an Ichneumon stepped forth, and thus addressed them. I perceive your distress, neighbours : and tho' I cannot assist you in the present difficulty,

difficulty, yet give me leave to offer you some advice that may be of use to you for the future. A little prudence is worth all your art and your courage : it may be glorious to overcome a great evil, but the wisest way is to prevent it. You despise the Crocodile while he is small and weak ; and do not sufficiently consider, that as he is a long-lived animal, so 'tis his peculiar property to grow as long as he lives. You see I am a poor, little feeble creature ; yet am I much more terrible to the Crocodile, and more useful to the country, than you are. I attack him in the egg ; and while you are contriving for months together, how to get the better of one Crocodile, and all to no purpose, I effectually destroy fifty of them in a day.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Tulip and the Rose.

A Tulip and a Rose happened to be near neighbours in the same garden. They were both indeed extremely beautiful ; yet the Rose engaged considerably more than an equal share of the gardener's attention. Enamoured, as in truth he was, of the delicious odour it diffused ; he appeared, in the eye of the Tulip, to be always kissing and caressing it. The envy and jealousy of rival beauties are not easily to be concealed. The Tulip, vain of its external charms, and unable to bear the thought of being forsaken for another, remonstrated in these words against the gardener's partiality. Why are my beauties thus neglected ? Are not my colours more bright, more various, and more inviting, than any which that red-faced Thing has to display ? Why then is she to engross your whole affection, and thus

thus for ever to be preferred?—Be not dissatisfied my fair Tulip, said the gardener; I acknowledge thy beauties, and admire them as they deserve. But there are found in my favourite Rose such attractive odours, such *internal* charms, that I enjoy a banquet in their fragrance, which no *mere* beauty can pretend to furnish.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Woodcock and the Mallard.

A Woodcock and a Mallard were feeding together in some marshy ground at the tail of a mill-pond. Lard, says the squeamish Woodcock, in what a voracious and beastly manner do you devour all that comes before you! Neither snail, frog, toad, nor any kind of filth, can escape the fury of your enormous appetite. All alike goes down, without *measure* and without *distinction*.—What an odious vice is *Gluttony*!

Good-lack! reply'd the Mallard, pray how came *you* to be my accuser? And whence has your excessive delicacy a right to censure my plain eating? Is it a crime to fill one's belly? Or is it not indeed a *Virtue* rather, to be pleased with the food which nature offers us? Surely I would sooner be charg'd with gluttony, than with that finical and sickly appetite, on which *you* are pleased to ground your superiority of *taste*.—What a silly vice is *Daintiness*.

Thus endeavouring to palliate their respective passions, our epicures parted with a mutual contempt. The Mallard hasting to devour some garbage, which was in reality a *bait*, immediately gorged an hook thro' mere greediness and oversight: while the Woodcock, flying thro' a glade, in order to seek his favourite juices, was entangled in

in a net, spread across it for that purpose : falling each of them a sacrifice to their *different*, but *equal* foibles.

FABLE XXXVII.

The two Trouts and the Gudgeon.

A Fisherman in the month of May, stood angling on the banks of Thames, with an artificial fly. He threw his bait with so much art, that a young Trout was rushing towards it, when she was prevented by her mother. Never, said she, my child, be too precipitate, where there is a possibility of danger. Take due time to consider, before you risk an action that *may* be fatal. How know you whether yon appearance be *indeed* a fly, or the snare of an enemy?—Let some one else make the experiment *before* you. If it *be* a fly, he very probably will elude the first attack : and then the second may be made, if not with success, at least with safety.—She had no sooner uttered this caution, than a Gudgeon seiz'd upon the pretended fly, and became an example to the giddy daughter, of the great importance of her mother's counsel.

FABLE XXXVIII.

The Stars and the Sky-Rocket.

AS a Rocket, on a rejoicing night, ascended thro' the air, and observed the stream of light that distinguished his passage, he could not forbear exulting in his elevation, and calling upon the Stars to do him reverence. Behold, said he, what gazing multitudes admire the lustre^e of *my* train, whilst all *your* feeble sparks of light pass unobserved,

observed, or disregarded ! The Stars heard his empty boast with a silent indignation : the Dog-Star only vouchsafed to answer him. How erroneous, said he, are *their* conclusions who listen to the voice of popular applause ! 'Tis true, the novelty of thy appearance may procure to *thee* more admiration than is allotted to *our* daily course, although indeed a lasting miracle. But do not estimate thy importance by the capricious fancy of misguided men. Know thyself to be the useless pageant, the frail production of a mortal hand. Even while I speak, thy blaze is extinguished, and thou art sunk into oblivion. We, on the other hand, were lighted up by heaven for the advantage of mankind, and our glory shall endure for ever.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Farmer and his three Enemies.

A Wolf, a Fox, and a Hare, happened one evening to be foraging in different parts of a Farmer's yard. Their first effort was pretty successful, and they returned in safety to their several quarters : however, not so happy, as to be unperceived by the Farmer's watchful eye ; who, placing several kinds of snares, made each of them his prisoner in the next attempt. He first took the Hare to task, who confessed she had eaten a few turnep-tops, merely to satisfy her hunger : besought him piteously to spare her life, and promised never to enter his grounds again. He then accosted the Fox ; who in a fawning obsequious tone, protested that he came into his premises, thro' no other motive than pure good will, to restrain the Hares and other vermin from the plunder of his corn ; and that, whatever evil tongues might say, he had too great a regard
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both for him and for justice, to be in the least capable of any dishonest action. He last of all examined the Wolf, what business brought *him* within the purlieus of a Farmer's yard. The Wolf very impudently declared, it was with a view of destroying his lambs, to which he had an undoubted right: that the Farmer himself was the only felon, who robbed the community of Wolves of what was meant to be their proper food. That this, at least, was his opinion: and, whatever fate attended him, he should not scruple to risque his life in the pursuit of his lawful prey.

The Farmer having heard their pleas, determined the cause in the following manner. The Hare, said he, deserves compassion, for the penitence he shews, and the humble confession he has made:—As for the Fox and Wolf, let *them* be hanged *together*; their crimes themselves *alike* deserve it, and are *equally* heightened by the aggravations of *hypocrisy* and of *impudence*.

FABLE XL.

The Snail and the Statue.

A Statue of the *Medicean Venus* was erected in a grove sacred to beauty and the fine arts. Its modest attitude, its elegant proportions, assisted by the situation in which it was placed, attracted the regard of every delicate observer.—A Snail, who had fixed himself beneath the moulding of the pedestal, beheld with an evil eye the admiration it excited. Wherefore, watching his opportunity, he strove by trailing his filthy slime over every limb and feature, to obliterate those beauties which he could not endure to hear so much applauded. An honest linnet however
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who observed him at his dirty work, took the freedom to assure him that he would infallibly lose his labour : For altho', said he, to an injudicious eye, thou mayst sully the perfections of this finished piece, yet a more accurate and close inspector will admire its beauty, through all the blemishes with which thou hast endeavoured to disguise it.

F A B L E XLI.

The Water-fall.

FR O M the head of a narrow valley that is wholly overshaded by the growth of trees, a large cascade bursts forth with a luxuriance unexpected. First the current rushes down a precipice with headlong impetuosity ; then dashed from rock to rock, and divided as it rolls along by fragments of stone or trunks of trees, it assumes a milk-white appearance, and sparkles through the gloom. All is intricacy ; all is profusion : and the tide, however ample, appears yet *more* considerable by the fantastic growth of roots that hide the limits of its channel. Thus bounding down from one descent to another, it no sooner gains the level, than it sinks beneath the earth, and buries all its glory at our feet.

A spectator, privy to the scanty source which furnished out this grand appearance, stood one day in a musing posture, and began to moralize on its prodigality. Ah silly stream ! said he, why wilt thou hasten to exhaust thy source, and thus willfully incur the contempt that waits on poverty ? Art thou ignorant that thy funds are by no means equal to this expence ? Fear not, my kind adviser, replied the generous cascade ; the gratitude I owe my master, who collected my
rills

rills into a stream, induces me to entertain his friends in the best manner I am able: When alone, I act with more œconomy.

F A B L E XLII.

The Oak and the Sycamore.

A Sycamore grew beside an Oak; and being not a little elevated by the first warm days in spring, began to pour forth its leaves apace, and to despise the naked Oak for insensibility, and want of spirit. The Oak, conscious of its superior nature, made this stoical reply; Be not, my friend, so much delighted with the first address of every fickle zephyr: consider the frosts may yet return: do not afford them an opportunity to nip thy beauties in their bud, if thou covetest an equal share in all the glories of the rising year. As for me, I only wait to see this genial warmth a little confirmed: and, whenever this is the case, I shall perhaps display a majesty that will not easily be shaken. But the tree that appears too suddenly affected by the first favourable glance of spring, will ever be the first to shed its verdure, and to droop beneath the frowns of winter.

F A B L E XLIII.

The Wolf and the Shepherd's Dog.

A Wolf ranging over the forest, came within the borders of a sheep-walk; when meeting with the Shepherd's Dog, that with a surly sort of growl demanded his business there, he thought proper to put on as innocent an appearance as he could, and protested upon his honour that he

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meant not the least offence. I am afraid, said the Dog, the pledge of your honour is but a poor deposite for your honesty: you must not take it amiss, if I object to the security. No slur upon my reputation, replied the Wolf, I beg of you. My sense of honour is as delicate, as my great achievements are renowned. I would not leave a stain upon my memory for the world. The fame of what are commonly called great achievements is very precious, to be sure, returned the Dog; almost equal to the character of an excellent butcher, a gallant highway-man, or an expert assassin. While the Dog was yet speaking, a lamb happened to stray within reach of our hero. The temptation was stronger than he was able to resist: He sprung upon his prey, and was scouring hastily away with it. However, the Dog seized, and held him, till the arrival of the Shepherd, and took measures for his execution. Just as he was going to dispatch him; I observe, says the Dog, that one of your noble achievements, is the destruction of the innocent. You are welcome to the renown, as you are also to the reward of it. As for me, I shall prefer the credit of having honestly defended my master's property, to any fame you have acquired by thus heroically invading it.

FABLE XLIV.

The Mushroom and the Acorn.

AN Acorn fell from the top of an old venerable Oak, full on the head of a Mushroom that unhappily sprung up beneath it. Wounded by the blow, the Mushroom complained of the incivility. Impertinent upstart, replied the Acorn, why didst thou, with familiar boldness, approach

approach so near to thy superiors? Shall the wretched offspring of a dunghill presume to raise its head, on a spot enobled by my ancestor for so many generations? I do not mean, returned the Mushroom, to dispute the honour of thy birth, or to put my own in competition with it. On the contrary, I must acknowledge that I hardly know from whence I sprung. But sure 'tis merit, and not mere ancestry, that obtains the regard of those, whose approbation is truly valuable. I have little perhaps to boast, but surely thou who hast thus insulted me, canst have no pretence to any. I please the palates of mankind, and give a poignant flavour to their most elegant entertainments; while thou, with all thy boasted ancestry, art fit to fatten hogs alone.

FABLE XLV.

Wisdom and Cunning.

AS Wisdom, in the form of a beautiful young lady, was travelling along the road, it happened, on a time, that she was benighted and lost her way. She however had not wandered far, when perceiving a light glimmer from a window at some distance, she endeavoured to direct her steps towards the house where it appeared. This proved to be no other than the miserable abode of *Selfishness*; who, beneath the semblance of a churlish and close-fisted peasant, had long taken up his residence in this lonesome habitation. She knocked at the Door; to enquire her way. The Lout opened it with caution; but, being immediately struck with the uncommon lustre of so fine a figure, he found his appetite awake, and became impatient for the gratification of it. Wis-

dom, on the other hand, feeling an utter detestation for him, would have willingly withdrawn herself; but alas! it was too late. He took advantage of her distress: seized, and forced her to his bed. Nine months afterwards she was delivered of a squint-eyed, fallow-faced imp, unto whom she could never be induced to shew any marks of natural affection. She would not even own him for her proper offspring; and he was put into the hands of *Dullness*, to be nursed and educated at her discretion. As he arrived to years of maturity, he was known by the name of *Cunning*. Some faint resemblance he bore of his *Mother*, procured him a degree of respect among persons of small discernment; and he shewed somewhat of *her* address in regard to the *means* by which he gained his ends; but he had so much of the *Father*, as never to extend his aims to any truly noble or social achievement.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Toad and the Cold-Fish.

AS a Gold-Fish, newly brought from the warm regions of the east, displayed his beauties in the sun; a Toad, who had long eyed him with no small degree of envy, broke out into this exclamation; How partial and how fantastick is the favour of mankind! regardless of every excellence that is obvious and familiar; and only struck with what is imported from a distant climate at a large expence! What a pompous bason is here constructed, and what extreme fondness is here shewn, for this insignificant stranger! When a *quadrupede* of my importance is neglected, shun'd, and even persecuted. Surely were I to appear in China, I should receive the same or per-
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haps greater honours than are lavished here upon this tinsel favourite.

The Gold-fish, conscious of his real beauty and somewhat angry to be thus insulted by so very unsightly and deform'd a creature, made this rational reply; it must be confessed that the opinions of men, are sometimes guided by the caprice you mention. Yet, as for me and the rest of my tribe, it is well known that if we are admired in England, we are not less admired at home: being there esteemed by the greatest mandarins, fed by stated officers, and lodged in basons, as superb as any your nation has to boast. Perhaps then, notwithstanding your sage remark, there are some virtues and some qualities that please or disgust almost universally; and as *innocence* joined to *beauty* seldom fails to procure esteem, so *malice* added to *deformity* will cause as general a detestation.

FABLE XLVII.

The Hermit.

A Certain Hermit had scooped his cave near the summit of a lofty mountain, from whence he had an opportunity of surveying a large extent both of sea and land. He sat, one evening, contemplating with pleasure on the various objects that lay diffused before him. The woods were drest in the brightest verdure; the thickets adorned with the gayest blossoms. The birds caroled beneath the branches; the lambs frolicked around the meads; the peasant whistled beside his team; and the ships driven by gentle gales were returning safely into their proper harbours. In short, the arrival of spring had doubly enlivened the whole scene before his eye; and

every object yielded a display either of *beauty* or of *happiness*.

On a sudden arose a violent storm. The winds mustered all their fury, and whole forests of oak lay scattered on the ground. Darkness instantly succeeded; hail stones and rain were poured forth in cataracts, and lightning and thunder added horror to the gloom.

And now the sea piled up in mountains bore aloft the largest vessels, while the horrid uproar of its waves drowned the shrieks of the wretched mariners. When the whole tempest had exhausted its fury, it was instantly followed by the shock of an earthquake.

The poor inhabitants, of the neighbouring villages flocked in crowds to our Hermit's cave; fully convinced, that his well-known sanctity would be able to protect them in their distress. They were, however, not a little surprised at the profound tranquillity that appeared in his countenance. "My friends, said he, be not dismayed. Terrible to *me*, as well as to *you*, would have been the war of elements we have just beheld; but that I have meditated with so much attention on the various works of Providence, as to be persuaded that his *goodness* is equal to his *power*."

F A B L E XLVIII.

The Dove.

A Dove that had a mate and young ones, happening to spy her cage door open, was driven by a sudden impulse to fly out into an adjacent grove. There, perched upon the bough of a sycamore, she sat as it were wrapt in deep contemplation; not recovering from her reverie,

reverie, until the owner drew nigh unseen, and brought her back to her little family.

Art thou not ashamed then, says her mate, thus to desert thy helpless offspring? Art thou not base to abandon *me*, for the company of birds to whom thou art a stranger? Could I have harboured such a thought? I, who have been ever constant to our first engagement; and must have died of mere despair, hadst thou not returned to my embraces? But how, alas, returned! Not, as it seems, by choice; but ensnared by dint of artifice, and brought hither by constraint.

Have patience, replied the rambler, and hear the plea of thy repentant mate. Witness all ye powers of wedlock, ye that know what passes in the hearts of Doves, if ever, before this unhappy moment, I felt a wish to part from thee! The door, so seldom open, allowed but one moment for deliberation, and I happened to decide amiss. When removed to yonder wood, the air of liberty breathed so sweet, that, with horror I speak it, I felt a suspense about returning to the cage. Pardon, I pray thee, this one crime, and be well assured I will relapse no more. And that thou may'st be the more induc'd to pardon it, know that the love of liberty burns ever the strongest, in bosoms that are most prone to conjugal affection and the love of young.

F A B L E XLIX.

The Nightingale and the Bullfinch.

A Nightingale and a Bullfinch occupied two cages in the same apartment. The Nightingale perpetually varied her song, and every effort she made, afforded fresh entertainment. The Bullfinch always whistled the same dull tune that he

he had learnt, till all the family grew weary of the disgusting repetition. What is the reason, said the Bullfinch one day to his neighbour, that your songs are always heard with peculiar attention, while mine, I observe, are almost as wholly disregarded? The reason, replied the Nightingale, is obvious; your audience are sufficiently acquainted with every note you have been taught, and they know your natural abilities too well, to expect any thing new from *that quarter*. How then can you suppose they will listen to a songster, from whom nothing *native* or *original* is to be expected?

F A B L E L.

The Fighting Cocks and the Turkey.

TWO Cocks of the genuine game-breed, met by chance upon the confines of their respective walks. To such *great* and *heroic* souls, the smallest matter imaginable affords occasion for dispute. They approach each other with pride and indignation; they look defiance; they crow a challenge; and immediately commences a long and bloody battle. It was fought on both sides with so much courage and dexterity; they gave and they received such deep and desperate wounds; that they both lay down upon the turf utterly spent, blinded, and disabled. While this was their situation, a Turkey that had been a spectator of all that passed between them, drew near to the field of battle, and reproved them in this manner: “How foolish and absurd has been your quarrel, my good neighbours! A more ridiculous one could scarce have happened, among the most contentious of all creatures, men. Because you have crowed per-
haps

haps in each other's hearing, or that one of you has picked up a grain of corn upon the territories of his rival, you have both rendered yourselves miserable for the remainder of your days.

FABLE LI.

The King-fisher and the Sparrow.

AS a King-fisher was sitting beneath the shade, upon the banks of a river; she was surprised on a sudden by the fluttering of a Sparrow, that had eloped from the neighbouring town, to visit her. When the first compliments were over, "How is it possible, said the Sparrow, that a bird so finely adorned, can think of spending all her days in the very depth of retirement! The golden plumage of your breast, the shining azure of your pinions, were never given you to be concealed, but to attract the wonder of beholders. Why then should you not endeavour to know the world, and be, at the same time, yourself, both known and admired?" You are very complaisant at least, replied the King-fisher, to conclude that my being *admired*, would be the consequence of my being *known*. But it has sometimes been my lot, in the lonesome valleys that I frequent, to hear the complaints of *beauty* that has been neglected; and of *worth* that has been despised. Possibly it does not always happen, that even *superior excellence* is found to excite admiration, or to obtain encouragement. I have learn'd besides, not to build my happiness upon the opinion of others; so much as upon my own conviction, and the approbation of my own heart. Remember, I am a King-fisher; these woods and streams are my delight; and so long as they are free from winds and tempests,

tempests, believe me, I am perfectly content with my situation. Why therefore should I court the noise and bustle of the world, which I find so little agreeable to my native disposition? It may be the joy of a Sparrow to indulge his curiosity, and to display his eloquence. I, for my part, love silence, privacy, and contemplation; and think that Every-one should consult the native bias of his temper, before he chuses the way of life in which he expects to meet with happiness.

F A B L E LII.

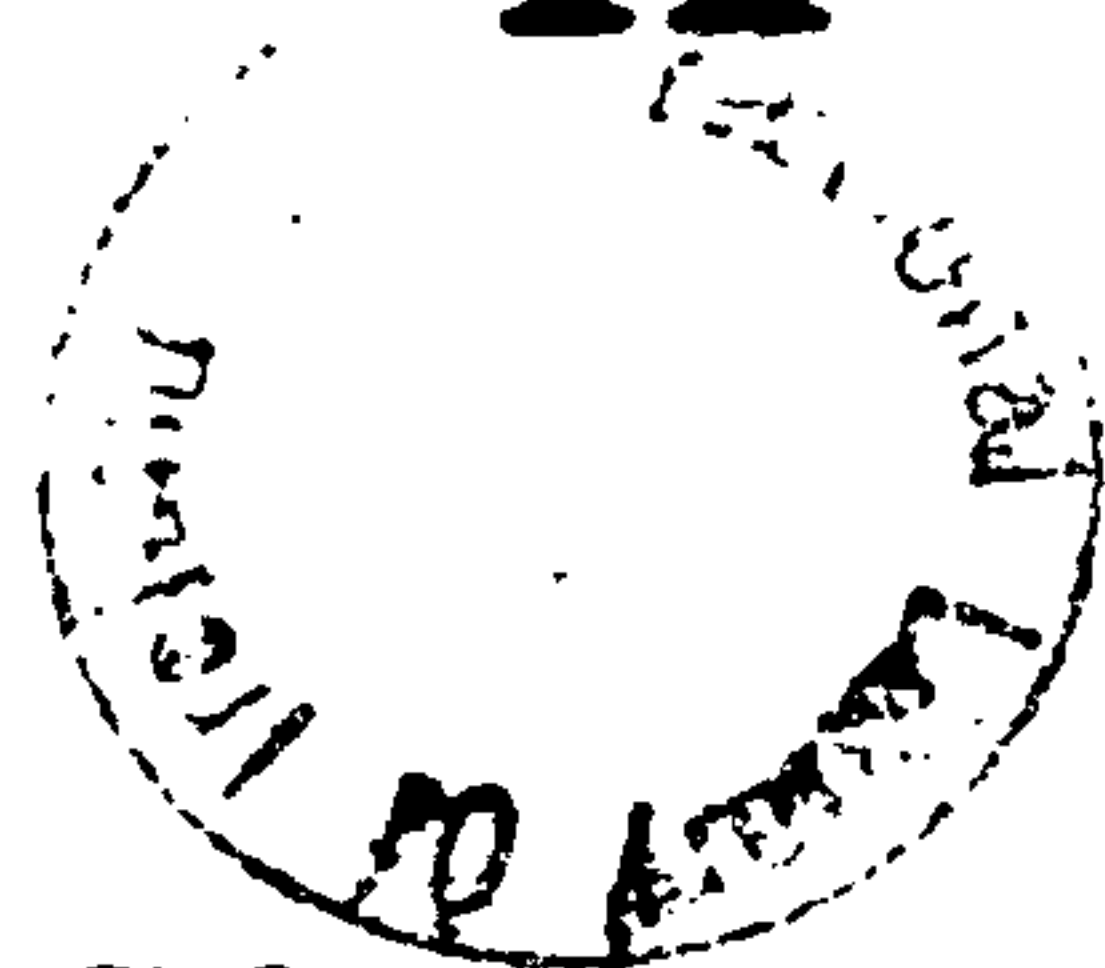
The Bee and the Spider.

ON the leaves and flowers of the same shrub, a Spider and a Bee pursued their several occupations; the one covering her thighs with honey; the other distending his bag with poison. The Spider, as he glanced his eye obliquely at the Bee, was ruminating with spleen on the superiority of her productions. And how happens it, said he, in a peevish tone, that I am able to collect nothing but poison, from the self-same plant that supplies *thee* with honey? My pains and industry are not less than thine; in those respects, we are each indefatigable. It proceeds only, replied the Bee, from our opposite tempers and constitution. The benevolence and sweetness of *my* disposition gives a similar flavour to every thing I touch; whereas *thy* malignity turns even *that* to poison, which by a different process had been the purest of honey.

I N D E X

T O T H E

F I R S T B O O K.



F A B L E I.

The Trees and the Bramble.

TH E most worthless persons are generally the most presuming.

F A B L E II.

The Frogs desiring a King.

'Tis better to bear with some defects in a mild and gentle government, than to risque the greater evils of tyranny and persecution.

F A B L E III.

The Wolf and the Shepherds.

We severely censure that in others, which we ourselves practise without scruple.

F A B L E IV.

The Belly and the Members.

The folly of wishing to withhold our part from the support of civil government.

F A B L E V.

The Fox and the Swallow.

We should well consider, whether the removal of a present evil does not tend to introduce a greater.

F A B L E VI.

The Fox and the Raven.

Wherever flattery gains admision, it seems to banish common-sense.

I N D E X.

F A B L E VII.

The Fox and the Stork.

We should always reflect, before we rally another, whether we can bear to have the jest retorted.

F A B L E VIII.

The Daw with borrowed Feathers.

To aim at figure by the means either of borrowed wit, or borrowed money, generally subjects us at last to tenfold ridicule.

F A B L E IX.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

Those who do not feel the sentiments of humanity, will seldom listen to the pleas of reason.

F A B L E X.

The Mountain in Labour.

To raise uncommon expectations, renders an ordinary event ridiculous.

F A B L E XI.

The Boys and the Frogs.

'Tis unjust and cruel to raise ourselves mirth at the expence of another's peace and happiness.

F A B L E XII.

The Lark and her Young-ones.

To rely principally upon our own diligence, in matters that concern ourselves alone.

F A B L E XIII.

The Stag drinking.

The false estimate we often make in preferring our ornamental talents to our useful ones.

F A B L E XIV.

The Swallow and other Birds.

Some will listen to no conviction, but what they derive from fatal experience.

F A B L E XV.

The Ass and the Lap-dog.

The folly of attempting to recommend ourselves, by a behaviour foreign to our character.

F A-

I N D E X.

F A B L E XVI.

The Lion and the Mouse.

We may all need the assistance of our inferiors ; and should by no means consider the meanest among them, as wholly incapable of returning an obligation.

F A B L E XVII.

The Wolf and the Crane.

'Tis the utmost extent of some men's gratitude, barely to refrain from oppressing and injuring their benefactors.

F A B L E XVIII.

The Countryman and the Snake.

The folly of conferring either power upon the mischievous, or favours on the undeserving.

F A B L E XIX.

The Dog and the Shadow.

That an over-greedy disposition often subjects us to lose what we already possess.

F A B L E XX.

The Sun and the Wind.

Gentle means, on many occasions, are more effectual than violent ones.

F A B L E XXI.

The Wolf and the Mastiff.

That a mere competence with liberty, is preferable to servitude amid the greatest affluence.

F A B L E XXII.

Fortune and the School-boy.

We are always ready to censure fortune for the ill effects of our own carelessness.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Frog and the Ox.

The silly ambition to vie with our superiors, in regard to outward figure, rather than inward accomplishments, is often the cause of utter ruin.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Lion and other Beasts hunting.

The great imprudence of an association with too powerful allies.

F A B L E XXV.

The Ant and the Fly.

The independence acquired by industry, preferable to the most splendid state of vassalage.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Bear and the two Friends.

Cowards incapable of true friendship.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Bull and the Gnat.

The least considerable of all mankind are seldom destitute of self-importance.

F A B L E XXVIII.

The Wasp and the Bees.

The folly of arrogating to ourselves, works, of which we are by no means capable.

F A B L E XXIX.

The old Man and Death.

Men under calamity may seem to wish for death, but they seldom bid him welcome when he stares them in the face.

F A B L E XXX.

The Court and the Country-Mouse.

That even poverty with peace is preferable to the greatest affluence amidst anxiety.

F A B L E XXXI.

The Fox and the Goat.

That when we are going to encounter difficulties, we should depend more upon our own strength than the assistance of our neighbours.

F A B L E XXXII.

The Farmer, the Cranes, and the Stork.

Those who keep bad company, must often expect to suffer for the misbehaviour of their companions.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Oak and the Willow.

The courage of meeting death in an honourable cause, is more commendable than any address or artifice we can make use of to evade it.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Boy and the Filberds.

The surest way to gain our ends, is to moderate our desires.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Satyr and the Traveller.

We should immediately decline all commerce with a person we find to be a double dealer.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Horse and the Stag.

Let revenge be ever so sweet, 'tis too dear a purchase at the price of liberty.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Farmer and his Sons.

That industry is itself a treasure.

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Lion and the Gnat.

That little minds are so much elevated by any advantage gained over their superiors, as to be immediately thrown off their guard against a sudden change of fortune.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Miser and his Treasure.

'Tis the enjoyment of what we possess that alone gives it any real value.

F A B L E XL.

Minerva's Olive.

Whatever fancy may determine, the standing value of all things is in proportion to their use.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLI.

The Mimick and the Countryman.

There is no error too extravagant, for prepossession and partiality.

F A B L E XLII.

The Dog and the Crocodile.

'Tis ever dangerous to be long conversant with persons of a bad character.

F A B L E XLIII.

The Wolf in Disguise.

There would be little chance of detecting hypocrisy, were it not always addicted to over-act its part.

F A B L E XLIV.

The Bee and the Spider.

Neither ingenuity nor learning are intitled to regard, but in proportion as they contribute to the happiness of life.

F A B L E XLV.

The Ass and his Master.

That avarice often misses its point, thro' the means it uses to secure it.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Cock and the Fox.

To retort the artifice employed against us, is an allowable part of self-defence.

F A B L E XLVII.

The Eagle and the Crow.

A false estimate of our own abilities, ever exposes us to ridicule, and sometimes to danger.

F A B L E XLVIII.

The Farmer and the Stag.

Some expect the thanks that are due to a civility, while they endeavour clandestinely to undermine the value of it.

F A-

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLIX.

The Lion, the Tyger, and the Fox.

The intemperate rage of clients gives the lawyer an opportunity of seizing the property in dispute.

F A B L E L.

The Lion and the Ass.

A total neglect is the best return the generous can make to the scurrility of the base.

F A B L E LI.

The Snake and the Hedge-hog.

'Tis ever imprudent to join interests with those who are able to impose upon us their own conditions.

F A B L E LII.

The Trumpeter.

The fomentor of mischief, is at least as culpable as he who puts it in execution.

F A B L E LIII.

Vice and Fortune.

That fortune, without the concurrence of vice, cannot effectually destroy our happiness: whereas vice, without the help of fortune, can make us miserable to the last extreme.

F A B L E XIV.

The Bear and the Bees.

'Twere more prudent to acquiesce under an injury from a single person, than by an act of vengeance to bring upon us the rage of a whole community.

I N D E X

T O T H E

S E C O N D B O O K.

F A B L E I.

The Miller, his Son, and their Ass.

TH E necessity of pursuing the dictates of one's reason, instead of attempting to please all mankind.

F A B L E II.

The Sorcerers.

There are numbers of people who would unhinge the world, to ease themselves of the smallest inconvenience.

F A B L E III.

The Cameleon.

The different lights in which things appear to different judgments, recommend candor to the opinions of others, even at the time that we retain our own.

F A B L E IV.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

The young and artless should make caution supply the place of years and experience.

F A B L E V.

The Fox and the Bramble.

We should bear with patience a small evil, when it is connected with a greater good.

F A B L E VI.

The Falcon and the Hen.

Different kinds of experience account for different kinds of conduct.

F A B L E VII.

The Travellers and the Money-bag.

We cannot reasonably expect those to bear a part in our ill-fortune, whom we never permitted to share in our prosperity.

I N D E X.

F A B L E VIII.

The discontented Ass.

We greatly diminish the happiness of life, by undervaluing all that is short of perfection.

F A B L E IX.

The two Springs.

There is more to be expected from sedate and silent, than from noisy, turbulent, and ostentatious beginnings.

F A B L E X.

The Butterfly and the Rose.

We exclaim loudly against that inconstancy in another to which we originally gave occasion, by our own.

F A B L E XI.

The Tortoise and the two Ducks.

Curiosity often excites those people to hazardous undertakings, whom vanity and indiscretion render totally unfit for them.

F A B L E XII.

The Cat and the old Rat.

Repeated instances of artifice, create a suspicion that is our guard against it.

F A B L E XIII.

The Country-maid and the Milk-pail.

When we dwell much on distant and chimerical advantages ; we neglect our present business, and are exposed to real misfortunes.

F A B L E XIV.

The Cormorant and the Fishes.

'Tis extreme folly to ask advice of an interested adviser.

F A B L E XV.

The Atheist and the Acorn.

He who disputes the existence of a deity, will find himself confuted by every part of nature.

F A.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XVI.

The Lynk and the Mole.

We should use the talents that are allotted, and are most suitable to our species; instead of disparaging those faculties, that are as properly adapted to another.

F A B L E XVII.

The Spider and the Silk-worm.

He that is employed in works of use, generally advantages himself or others; while he who toils alone for fame, must often expect to lose his labour.

F A B L E XVIII.

The Bee and the Fly.

The greatest genius with a vindictive temper, is far surpass in point of happiness by men of talents less considerable.

F A B L E XIX.

Genius, Virtue, and Reputation.

That there are few things so irreparably lost, as reputation.

F A B L E XX.

The Court of Death.

Intemperance is the great and original cause, that generally shortens human life.

F A B L E XXI.

Industry and Sloth.

Our term of life does not allow time, for long-protracted deliberations.

F A B L E XXII.

The Harē's Ears.

A prudent person will not only preserve his innocence, but avoid the consequence of any seeming handle he may afford to his oppressor.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Hermit and the Bear.

The random zeal of inconsiderate friends, is often as hurtful as the wrath of enemies.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Passenger and the Pilot.

We are no where out of the reach of providence,
either to punish or to protect us.

F A B L E XXV.

The partial Judge.

The injuries we do, and those we suffer, are
seldom weighed in the same scales.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Fox that had lost his Tail.

'Tis common for men to wish others reduced to
their own level ; and we ought to guard against
such advice, as may proceed from this principle.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Nobleman and his Son.

The means suggested by superstition to secure us
from misfortune, often bring it upon our heads.

F A B L E XXVIII.

Jupiter and the Herdsman.

Were our ill-judged prayers to be always granted,
how many would be ruined at their own request.

F A B L E XXIX.

The Eagle and the Owl.

The partiality of parents, often makes them-
selves ridiculous, and their children unhappy.

F A B L E XXX.

The Plague among the Beasts.

The poor and helpless undergo those punishments
for small and trivial offences ; which the rich
and powerful escape, for crimes of a much
blackier nature.

F A B L E XXXI.

The Cat, the Cock, and a young Mouse.

If we trust merely to outward appearances, we
shall often err in distinguishing betwixt our
enemies and our friends.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXXII.

The Farmer and his Dog.

The greater room there appears for resentment; the more careful should we be, not to accuse an innocent person.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Gnat and the Bee.

Men expostulate to little purpose, when their own example confutes their argument.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Owl and the Eagle.

Narrow minds think the system of the universe should have been contrived to suit themselves alone.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Lion, the Wolf, and the Fox.

Men who meditate mischief, suggest the same to others; and generally pay dear for their forward gratifications.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Blind Man and the Lame.

The wants and weaknesses of individuals form the connections of society.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Lion, the Bear, and the Monkey.

It is often more prudent to suppress our sentiments than either to flatter or to rail.

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Owl and the Nightingale.

'Tis natural for a pedant to despise those arts, which polish our manners, and would extirpate pedantry.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Ant and the Caterpillar.

Boys of no very promising appearances, often become the greatest men.

F A B L E XL.

The two Foxes.

We should ever guard against those vices, that are chiefly incident to our times of life: excess

I N D E X.

and riot, whilst we are young ; and egregious parsimony as we grow in years.

F A B L E XLI.

The conceited Owl.

Schemes of ambition, without proper talents, always terminate in disgrace.

F A B L E XLII.

The Fox and the Cat.

Persons may write fine systems of morality, who never practised a single virtue.

F A B L E XLIII.

The two Horses.

The object of our pride, is often the cause of our misfortunes.

F A B L E XLIV.

The Dove and the Ant.

The most important acts of gratitude are oft performed by the most unlikely instruments.

F A B L E XLV.

The Parrot.

Gravity, tho' sometimes the mien of wisdom, is often found to be the mask of ignorance.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Cat and the Bat.

Inclination seems to have got the start of duty, when we seek to find it in books of casuistry.

F A B L E XLVII.

The two Lizards.

The superior safety of an obscure and humble station is a balance for the honours of high and envied life.

F A B L E XLVIII.

Jupiter's Lottery.

Folly passing with men for wisdom, makes each contented with his own share of understanding.

F A B L E XLIX.

The litigious Cats.

The scales of Judicature are seldom pois'd 'till there is little or nothing remains in either.

I N D E X.

F A B L E L.

The two Dogs.

Our own moderation will not secure us from disturbance, if we connect ourselves with men of turbulent and litigious dispositions.

F A B L E LI.

Death and Cupid.

The young should not act as tho' they were exempt from Death; nor the old forget to guard against the fooleries of Love.

F A B L E LII.

The Mock-bird.

Ridicule appears with a very ill grace, in persons who possess no one talent beside.

F A B L E LIII.

The Spectacles.

Our opinions of things are altogether as various, as tho' each saw them thro' a different medium; our attachment to these opinions as fix'd and firm, as tho' all saw them through the medium of truth.

I N D E X.

T O T H E

T H I R D B O O K.

F A B L E I.

The Red-breast and the Sparrow.

THAT imitation may be pardonable, where emulation would be presumptuous.

F A B L E II.

The two Bees.

The advantage of moderation, and extreme folly of intemperance,

I N D E X.

F A B L E III.

The Diamond and the Glow-worm.

That a strong point of light is as favourable to merit, as it is destructive to imposture.

F A B L E IV.

The Ostrich and the Pelican.

That the pleasures of parental fondness, make large amends for all its anxieties.

F A B L E V.

The Hounds in Couples.

That mutual compliances are necessary to matrimonial happiness.

F A B L E VI.

The Miser and the Magpye.

Men are seldom found to condemn themselves; otherwise than by the censures they pass upon their own faults, in other people.

F A B L E VII.

The Sensitive-Plant and the Thistle.

That both a mild disposition, and a vindictive temper generally meet with suitable return.

F A B L E VIII.

The Poet and the Death-watch.

The suggestions of vanity are as delusive as those of superstition.

F A B L E IX.

Pythagoras and the Critic.

The folly of estimating the works of others by the sole standard of our own conceptions.

F A B L E X.

The Bear.

The rudeness of considering religious opinions as the proper object of ridicule.

F A B L E XI.

The Stork and the Crow.

The weakness of placing the essence of religion, in the mere observance of rites and ceremonies.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XII.

Echo and the Owl.

The vain believe their imaginary perfectious engross the attention of all mankind.

F A B L E XIII.

Prometheus.

The blessing of hope is better adapted to the state of mortals, than the gift of prescience.

F A B L E XIV.

Momus.

That it is hardly possible to deprive malevolence of every occasion for a cavil.

F A B L E XV.

The Butterfly, the snail, and the Bee.

Fops may boast of their extensive travels, but 'tis only a few discerning persons that make the proper use of them.

F A B L E XVI.

The Tuberoſe and the Sun-flower.

The folly of resting in second causes, without reference to the first.

F A B L E XVII.

The Magpye and the Raven.

The fop who prides himself upon a large acquaintance, is but seldom capable of real friendship.

F A B L E XVIII.

The Diamond and the Load-stone.

That the greatest merit is often concealed under the most unpromising appearances.

F A B L E XIX.

The Boy and the Nettle.

There are certain persons who require to be treated rather with spirit and resolution, than either tenderness or delicacy.

F A B L E XX.

The Monster in the Sun.

The fault we many times impute to a character, is only to be found in the mind of the observer.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXI.

The discontented Bee.

The pleasures of life were a ballance for the pains ; did we not increase the latter by our own perverseness.

F A B L E XXII.

The Snipe-shooter.

That we often miss our point by dividing our attention.

F A B L E XXIII.

The Beggar and his Dog.

The misery of depending upon Patrons, whose charity has too much to do at home.

F A B L E XXIV.

The Sun and the Vapour.

Truth, tho' vanished, returns again ; slander is never of a durable nature.

F A B L E XXV.

Love and Folly.

That folly has often too great an influence in the direction of our amours.

F A B L E XXVI.

The Eclipse.

The favours of the great are too often obstructed, by the invidious offices of their mean dependents.

F A B L E XXVII.

The Boy and the Butterfly.

An immoderate pursuit of pleasure, is generally destructive of its object.

F A B L E XXVIII.

The toad and the Ephemeron.

A lazy reliance on the antiquity of a family, by far less honourable than an honest industry.

F A B L E XXIX.

The Peacock.

The parade and ceremony belonging to the great, are often a restraint upon their freedom and activity.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XXX.

The Fly in St. Paul's Cupola.

Never to estimate things beyond our reach, by the narrow standard of our own capacities.

F A B L E XXXI.

The Elm Tree and the Vine.

People who pride themselves upon their independence, often slight œconomy, the sole foundation of it.

F A B L E XXXII.

The Laurustinus and the Rose.

That friend is highly to be respected at all times, whose friendship is chiefly distinguished in adversity.

F A B L E XXXIII.

The Sensitive Plant and the Palm-tree.

That an excess of delicacy is to be considered rather as an infirmity, than as a virtue.

F A B L E XXXIV.

The Tentyrites and the Ichneumon.

On the facility of conquering many evils at first, which being long neglected become unsurmountable.

F A B L E XXXV.

The Tulip and the Rose.

External beauty will often captivate; but 'tis internal merit that secures the conquest.

F A B L E XXXVI.

The Woodcock and the Mallard.

A voracious appetite, and a fondness for dainties, equally take off our attention from more material concerns.

F A B L E XXXVII.

The Trouts and the Gudgeon.

A person can hardly be deemed too cautious, where the first mistake is irretrievable, or fatal.

F A B L E XXXVIII.

The Stars and the Sky-rocket.

The vulgar are captivated by the works of art; but

I N D E X.

the philosopher admires the works of nature.

F A B L E XXXIX.

The Farmer and his three Enemies.

That humility extenuates any crime, of which hypocrisy and impudence are equal aggravations.

F A B L E XL.

The Snail and the Statue.

'Tis the fate of envy to attack those characters that are superior to its malice.

F A B L E XLI.

The Water-fall.

A generous nature will find resources in œconomy for the occasional exertion of beneficence and hospitality.

F A B L E XLII.

The Oak and the Sycamore.

That he who is puffed up with the least gale of prosperity, will as suddenly sink beneath the blasts of misfortune.

F A B L E XLIII.

The Wolf and the Shepherd's Dog.

That common honesty is a better principle, than what we often compliment with the name of heroism.

F A B L E XLIV.

The Mushroom and the Acorn.

The man who values himself too highly upon his birth, has seldom much claim to any other merit.

F A B L E XLV.

Wisdom and Cunning.

Cunning seems to differ from wisdom, more in the end that it proposes to itself, than in the means that it employs.

F A B L E XLVI.

The Toad and the Gold-Fish.

Beauty join'd with innocence is universally respected ; malice added to deformity as universally abhorred.

I N D E X.

F A B L E XLVII.

The Hermit.

The goodness of Providence, apparent in his works, is a proper motive for our tranquillity amidst every exertion of his power.

F A B L E XLVIII.

The Dove.

The love of liberty in well constituted minds, holds a place little inferior to that of natural affection.

F A B L E XLIX.

The Nightingale and the Bullfinch.

Learning is undoubtedly of the utmost advantage to real genius : yet, when put in competition, the funds of the one are limited, and of the other, inexhaustible.

F A B L E L.

The Fighting Cocks and the Turkey.

Litigious persons rarely weigh the cause, together with the consequence, of their impetuosity.

F A B L E LI.

The King-fisher and the Sparrow.

Men's natural tempers will best direct them to their proper sphere, in the pursuit of happiness.

F A B L E LII.

The Spider and the Bee.

That the candid reader will reap improvement where the froward critic finds only matter of censure.

F I N I S.